STATES DIVIDED: HISTORY, CONFLICT, AND STATE FORMATION IN MEXICO AND COLOMBIA

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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August 2017

STATES DIVIDED: HISTORY, CONFLICT, AND STATE FORMATION IN MEXICO AND COLOMBIA

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Cornell University 2017

Why do states grow stronger and more capable in some areas of their territory than in others? This dissertation examines the origins of domestic variation in state strength in Mexico and Colombia and shows that the geography of state power in each country reflects historical lines of political antagonism. Challenging prevailing geographic and economic explanations of the reach of the state, it traces the uneven development of state capacity across territory and functions to sharp domestic cleavages that organize state-building efforts and societal reactions to the state during formative historical periods. The dissertation argues that partisanship is a pervasive force in the state's penetration of territory and society, but partisanship spawns different territorial patterns of state capacity across constituent dimensions of the concept. The result is that, unlike conventionally assumed, not all types of state capacity hang together at the sub-national level. The study pursues this argument empirically relying on new, geo-referenced, and highly disaggregated historical datasets for both Mexico and Colombia, collected through intensive archival research and spanning various domains of state activity. Using historical analysis and statistical methods, I demonstrate the connections between the religious cleavage that split Mexican society in the aftermath of the Revolution and the state's subsequent ability to extract fiscal revenue, monopolize the means of violence at the local level, provide law and order, allocate land, and educate its citizens across territory. Similarly, I show that the historical

hegemonic struggle between the Liberal and Conservative Parties in Colombia impressed a squarely partisan logic into state development in key domains like taxation and education. In both cases, the study documents that intense political struggles during state formation made states develop unevenly across geography and institutional arenas simultaneously, with legacies that extend to this day. The dissertation's findings are significant for our understanding of state-building, the varying ability of states to enhance citizens' welfare, and the origins of institutional weakness.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mariano Sanchez Talanquer was born in Mexico City, Mexico. He received a B.A. degree in Political Science and International Relations from the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE) in 2008. His research interests include state-building, long-run institutional development, and the politics of inequality, with a particular focus on Latin America. He will be an Academy Scholar at the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies starting in August 2017.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My advisors, friends, and family made it possible for me to complete this dissertation. I am deeply grateful to the members of my dissertation committee for their guidance, encouragement, and insightful feedback. My main advisor, Ken Roberts, has pushed me intellectually since I first arrived at Cornell, encouraged me to follow my interests and instincts, and mentored me with patience and good humor. I have also had the good fortune of working under the guidance of Sid Tarrow, whose vast knowledge and wise words greatly influenced my thinking. Tom Pepinsky provided precisely the kind of comments and motivation that I needed at different stages. He gave incredibly detailed and useful feedback on every single part of the project and often helped me fix what seemed unfixable. I also owe an enormous debt to Gustavo Flores-Macías, who in addition to giving me plenty of advice and excellent comments, has been extremely generous and supportive on a personal level.

Nic van de Walle agreed to read the entire dissertation, helped me think about the wider implications of my argument, and provided valuable comments and suggestions. Ana Paula Peñalva and Vanessa Loera provided excellent research assistance. I would like to acknowledge the financial support of Cornell University, the Mexico-United States Fulbright Commission, the Social Science Research Council, and Mexico's National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT).

Friends and family made this all possible. Special thanks go to Eduardo Distel, Ricardo Becerra, Miguel Ángel López, Andrés Lajous, Natalie Letsa, Thibaud Marcesse, and Janice Gallagher. Most importantly, I want to thank my parents and grandparents for their love and unremitting support. Finally, I would have never reached this stage without my wife, Xiomara. This dissertation is dedicated to her, for her love and friendship.

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This is a study about states and their varying ability to shape human life and implement decisions across the territory they claim to govern. It investigates the political forces that lie behind the development of coercive, extractive, and social regulatory state institutions, as well as their territorially uneven implantation. This kind of investigation speaks to the very essence of state power because "the modern state has been constructed to create a uniformity or universality to life within its borders," which underlies the promise of equal citizenship rights for those subject to the state's authority.[1] In practice, of course, states have often formed very unevenly within their borders. Their performance varies sharply across territory and functions, with great consequence for the quality of citizenship, among many other relevant outcomes.

The study grounds this variation in politics. It aims to show that differences in state performance within a polity are deeply shaped by historical struggles for political dominance between rival groups, and cannot simply be explained by geography or levels of economic development. During formative periods of the state, internal political oppositions lead to fateful decisions about what types of capacities are built and where. The cleavages or fault lines of the past thus offer a window into the workings of the state across its territory. In a series of empirical chapters that disaggregate the state both spatially and functionally, I document the key impact that the structure of intergroup conflict during decisive historical moments can have on the development of different state capabilities, as well as on the strength of the linkages between the

[1] The quote is from Migdal (2001, 232).

state and distinct segments of society. Uncovering the historical lines of political antagonism helps illuminate the performance of the governing apparatus across the territory it formally controls.

The findings span different spheres of state power over long time periods and in two quite distinct countries, but abstracting from time and place, they fall under a common theoretical logic. Historically, some groups, in conflict with others, take over the state and build up its capacities in order to accomplish certain political ends, that is, to impose their will upon political enemies. Rival groups seek to undermine their authority and resist. Institutions and attitudes toward the state are formed unevenly over the course of these conflicts for supremacy and domination, with lasting legacies: sub-national outcomes related to state performance vary depending on *who* state-built, and which groups, in turn, were politically excluded. State-building can thus be seen as embedded in a certain structure of political oppositions that shapes both institutional investments and the societal responses to the state, the two constituent parts of *state formation*. The state's performance across territory and issue domains is a function of these two basic, interactive components.

Throughout the study, I show that this simple theoretical logic goes a long way in explaining where, and what type, of institutional capacity is developed or under-developed in a certain polity. It helps account for variation in the state's ability to provide personal security, raise taxes, educate citizens, and perform other important tasks. Given its deep roots in the structure of intergroup conflict, state capacity is intrinsically political. Independent of the benefits or welfare-enhancing functions we may attribute to modern states, their emergence and capabilities are bound up with efforts by political actors and social groups to exercise power over others—that is, with the very substance of politics.

I elaborate and empirically substantiate these arguments for the cases of Mexico and Colombia, two countries displaying sharp internal variation in state strength, both contemporaneously and historically. In both of these countries, too, the inability of governments to control internal violence, extract sufficient tax revenues, and effectively uphold a set of citizenship rights has had major consequences for social integration and individual wellbeing. I trace the spatial and functional differences in state performance that have figured so prominently in these countries' development to pronounced internal fractures that lay at the basis of their processes of state formation.

Major episodes of political change and state-building in twentieth-century Mexico and Colombia, backed by specific sociopolitical coalitions, increased the weight of the state in everyday life and its impact on individuals' choices and life chances. Yet these formative institutional periods were also moments of acute political polarization and deep intergroup conflict. State-building was not the fruit of broad agreements in order to improve the provision of public goods or better fight against external enemies, but a highly contested project tied to the pursuit of partisan goals, which mirrored and reproduced sharp internal political antagonisms.

Rulers' efforts to develop different forms of institutional capacity varied pronouncedly along cleavage lines, and so did social support for state measures. Out of these foundational conflicts, discernible territorial patterns of state capacity emerged, although these could vary across arenas of state activity. Cleavage structures shaped state development in identifiable ways, but could spawn different, sometimes opposing trajectories in the state's ability to tax, provide order, impart justice, or educate citizens. The complex geography of state power, marked by an uneven and possibly discordant development of different capacities and institutions, becomes intelligible when superimposed on the map of historical political antagonisms.

In the case of Mexico, my account examines the religious cleavage that pitted anticlerical elites against political Catholics in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917) as a generative force of uneven patterns of state development. The dialectical conflict between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces, fought most intensely in the 1920s and 1930s, conditioned state performance in the short and long runs, via its powerful effects on founding institutional investments and state-building decisions, as well as on social groups' relative inclination to grant compliance. This last factor, key in determining what the state could actually accomplish, was rooted in mass political identities and views about legitimacy that varied sharply across the cleavage. Even after the open and often violent clashes over religious issues subsided, resentment, suspicion, and opposition continued to mark relations between political Catholics and the Mexican party-state. The salience of religious-based antagonism during a formative period of the state thus translated into distinctive patterns of institutional development and performance, still visible in several domains.

In the Colombian case, a deep-seated partisan fracture, partly animated by religious issues but ultimately acquiring autonomous political weight, was similarly decisive for state development. The Liberal-Conservative polarity that permeated society and the political class since the nineteenth century blurred the distinctions between building the state's capacity and accomplishing staunchly partisan ends. Locked into a struggle for partisan hegemony, both political formations converted state institutions into tools to achieve out-party subordination. The fusion of state and party, a feature of Colombian politics until the mid-twentieth century, impressed a squarely partisan logic into state development in key domains like taxation or education. Sub-national outcomes would vary across state functions depending on which of the parties historically pushed forward with institutional investments, and which was in turn

politically excluded, but partisan effects were in any case pervasive. The foundational Liberal-Conservative cleavage cast a long shadow over the contours and performance of the Colombian state.

The analysis of the relationship between intergroup conflict and state development draws in each country on a rich and original empirical base. Examining various dimensions of state capacity sub-nationally required significant historical research and original data collection. In subsequent chapters, I exploit new country datasets covering fiscal, coercive, and social regulatory functions of the state over long time periods, and built at the lowest administrative level. The bulk of these data were coded for each municipality from previously untapped primary sources, collected through painstaking archival work in both Mexico and Colombia. In addition, I draw on newly coded historical census data, unexplored historical government publications, qualitative archival evidence, and close engagement with secondary sources from across the social sciences. The datasets that form the empirical core of this study are among the most comprehensive sources on the presence and performance of key state institutions collected to date in both countries. They allow mapping and analyzing, at a high level of spatial disaggregation, how the state was built and what it could actually accomplish, from relevant historical junctures into the present.

Before moving into the empirical sections, this introductory chapter lays the theoretical and conceptual ground. I begin by delineating the puzzle of state development in territory. This is a question about one of the key historical political processes of the modern world—how states that are territorially sovereign and expected to perform crucial functions for human wellbeing organize power, develop institutions, and put down roots within their borders. I then present a general theoretical framework that connects the structure of domestic conflict—which I

conceptualize as cleavages—during formative institutional periods, to the uneven development of the state in its territory. My discussion elaborates on why an approach emphasizing historical cleavages can be theoretically productive in the study of sub-national state development and state-society relations, as well as help us illuminate empirical variation in state performance.

In presenting my argument, I enter into dialogue with the broader state building literature, which tends to explain the rise of territorially well-developed states as a product of sustained *external* warfare and threats. I argue that absent those unifying pressures from outside, state building projects are deeply marked by *internal* antagonisms that bequeath highly uneven states. States' capacities across space reflect, precisely, those historical cleavages. After presenting the theoretical framework, I discuss conceptual and measurement issues relevant to the study of the territorial formation of the state across functional domains. The chapter ends by outlining the structure of the rest of the study.

1.1 States in Territory

Territoriality is part of the very definition of the state.[2] It implies that political authority extends over geographic space and is also geographically bounded, which makes of space an outright political category (Maier 2016). In this sense, the development of institutions and governing capacities across a territory is a fundamental question about politics—indeed, it addresses the essence of the state. Across a wide variety of topics, scholars have adopted a sub-national approach to understand the determinants of relevant political and economic outcomes (e.g. Giraudy 2015) and transcend "whole nation bias" (Snyder 2001). "Scaling down" can

[2] The most prominent example is, of course, Weber's definition. For him, the state is a "ruling organization" whose "political character" is determined by the combination of two factors: the use of physical force *and* "the fact that the authority of its administrative staff is claimed as binding within a territorial area" (1978, 54–55). The most conventionally cited definition also emphasizes territory: "a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a given territory" (M. Weber 1991, 78).

confer important inferential advantages, and often striking subnational contrasts are a fertile ground for comparative research. But in the study of state-building and state capacity, examining within-country variation not only carries potential methodological advantages and empirical promise. Because to speak of the state is to speak of territory, it is a conceptual imperative.

It is a fact that within countries, life under the state varies sharply with geographic location. "Unevenness" is a matter of degree, but in political systems founded upon principles of equal citizenship and territorial sovereignty, even moderate levels of irregularity carry important normative implications. As O'Donnell explained, the rule of law, rights of all kind, and core democratic tenets are all premised on the notion of a state that upholds its claim to authority uniformly across space (1993, 2004).

The uneven capacity or "reach" of state institutions has also been shown to be an important causal factor in empirical studies. It figures prominently in research on crime, civil wars, and armed group governance (Arjona 2016; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Gambetta 1993); revolutionary movements and state collapse (Goodwin 2001; Skocpol 1979); public good provision and economic growth (Acemoglu, García-Jimeno, and Robinson 2015); cultural and linguistic diversity (Darden and Mylonas 2016; E. Weber 1976); and the workings of social movements (Tarrow 2011; Yashar 2005). The list, of course, is far from exhaustive, but it illustrates why investigating the state *within* borders matters.

In fact, given its multiple implications, scholars increasingly emphasize the importance of relying on indicators of national state capacity that are sensitive to territorial reach (Giraudy and Luna 2017; Kurtz and Schrank 2012; Soifer 2008, 2015). Like much recent research on the state, these works build on Michael Mann's influential concept of "infrastructural power," which

considers the ability to actually shape social life *throughout territory* the essence of "stateness."[3] As these scholars argue, measures that account for this spatial aspect are better characterizations of the overall capacity of the state in a given country. They are thus preferable, for the purposes of cross-country comparative research, to crude whole-country averages that do not adjust for territorial diversity.

Yet how do we account for the uneven formation of states within their borders itself? What explains internal patterns of variation? Much subnational empirical research in the social sciences of course addresses outcomes related to state capacity and performance, even if not explicitly working in a state formation framework. Yet there is no broadly accepted theoretical paradigm or historical narrative on the within-country mechanics of state-building, and certainly no equivalent to the mature cross-national literature on the topic, in which explanations centered on interstate warfare are well-established (Tilly 1992).

Studies of state-building centered on the variation across countries or world regions, for their part, seldom pay close attention to how differences in institutional development emerge within a country's territory, beyond basic considerations related to the control of strategic versus peripheral regions.[4] In dominant theories of state development, based mainly on studies of Western Europe, the process of organizing power in territory appears largely as a by-product of the external threats that make the state. As a result, our understanding of a key political process of the modern era is still incomplete. The recent words of prominent scholars of the state are worth quoting at length:

[3] Mann defined infrastructural power as "the institutional capacity of a central state, despotic or not, to penetrate its territories and logistically implement decisions" (Mann 2012, 59). The concept of "stateness," or how much of a state the state actually is, is from Nettl (1968).

[4] Relevant exceptions, all dealing with cases outside Latin America, include Bensel (1990); Hechter (1999); Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti (1993); and Ziblatt (2006).

> We also need to understand that the state is not a solid mass equally present throughout a territory, but a fluid variable that is more and less present in one part or another…Such variation may be a critical part of how we can understand and improve the social wellbeing of people throughout the world. Although scholars have recognized the existence of subnational variation in the territorial reach of the state, more empirical studies are needed to demonstrate this reality as it relates to development outcomes. We wish to argue that 'reach'…is an important component in 'state performance' in and of itself (Centeno, Yashar, and Kohli 2017, 16).

Investigating the processes by which within-country variations in institutional development and state performance have emerged is of particular relevance for Latin America. As mentioned above, "unevenness" is itself a variable. Some states provide services and govern their territory more uniformly than others. At the high end of the world distribution of stateness, strong states have come closer to creating the kind of homogeneity or "universality to life" (Migdal 2001, 232) within their borders implied by classic definitions, and feared by critics of standardizing states (Scott 1998). At the other end, governments in inchoate states often lack the resources, basic administrative structure, and even the will to extend meaningfully beyond the centers of power or to link existing local power structures into a coherent unit. Low levels of territorial unevenness may exist not because state structures are broadly-implanted, but because there is not much of a state at all.

In the middle of the range, many states in Latin America display striking levels of domestic variation in institutional performance (Soifer 2015). In a recent study comparing the territorial reach of states across regions of the world, Giraudy and Luna conclude that "unevenness, in spite of intermediate to high levels of resources for territorial penetration, seems to be a characteristic trait of Latin American countries" (2017, 107). As this suggests, states in the region are "neither dwarfs nor Leviathans" (Harbers 2015). For good or ill, their hand is visible in the lives of the majority of their subjects. In parts of their territory, and not just capital cities, their authority is reasonably strong and uncontested. Over the past two centuries, they

have meaningfully transformed their societies and withstood major changes in world politics as independent organizations, much longer than states in other regions of the developing world.

At the same time, most Latin American states have far from monopolized the means of violence, become efficient fiscal machines, or extended their legal systems homogeneously throughout territory. Moreover, they preside over the highest levels of socioeconomic inequality in the world, which readily betray their uneven provision of public services and inability to build cohesive territorial units. As Centeno explains, the paradox of the Latin American state is that it has been independent and sovereign for quite long without growing into a competent ruling organization (2002, 3).

One crucial point must be brought up now, and because of its significance, it will arise repeatedly in this study. The issue of the territorial unevenness of the state is not properly addressed by letting an encompassing concept like "state capacity" or "state performance" vary in space along a single dimension (like overall bureaucratic presence) or task (like taxation or service provision)—as most research, at all levels of analysis, tends to do. Nor is it simply or mainly a matter of administratively abandoned geographic space, sparsely populated areas, or remote regions far from the political centers. Complex geographies have shaped the extension of political authority in Latin America (Safford 2013), but the state is not merely "present" in some regions and "absent" in others, nor is the variation reducible to such kind of structural environmental factors—more on this below.

Rather, and this is the key point, *patterns of territorial unevenness may differ across state capacities*, as I will thoroughly document for Mexico and Colombia. This means that states have developed unevenly in two senses *simultaneously*—across geography *and* domains of state activity. By implication, as one points to different locations in a country's map, contact with the

state varies not simply in intensity, but *qualitatively*. The fiscal state, the coercive state, or the education state, as the analysis will show, are different creatures shaped by common forces, but different after all. At stake are inconsistent forms of linking with society, exerting authority, and cultivating specific capabilities across territory.

For the purposes of cross-national analysis, sharper contrasts in institutional capacity and state performance can be properly considered as indicative of overall lower stateness (Soifer 2015). My concern here, however, is different. It is about the drivers of within-country variation itself, as a core political question in a world of territorially sovereign states and purportedly equal citizenship within national boundaries. The considerable unevenness that characterizes states in Latin America is not reducible to a sheer absence of state-building projects. To the contrary, it logically implies that institutional development has taken place, yet of a particularly unequal kind. What requires analysis is not simply an overall lack of state-building, but its very asymmetric character.

The question lies in understanding why specific institutions and capacities have (not) been built in certain parts of the territory to a similar extent as in others. Why have identifiable periods of state development unfolded differently across geographic space *and* state function, and how have uneven patterns of performance persisted over time? We need, in short, a historically-grounded explanation of the process leading to the emergence of "malformed," fractured states.

Constraints and incentives arising from physical and economic geography play, undoubtedly, an important role. Many existing arguments associate state weakness or regional institutional inequalities with the obstacles that rough terrain, large distances, and the like create for the exercise of political authority. Herbst, for example, argues that extensive and sparsely-

populated “inhospitable territories” discouraged African state-builders from broadcasting power within boundaries arbitrarily defined by colonizers (2000, 11). As a result, state control decreases as distance from the center of power increases. Fearon and Laitin famously identified “rough terrain” at a “distance from the centers of state power” as one of the best predictors of insurgency, arguing that it allows rebels to hide from the state (2003, 80). The impact of geography has become a well-established finding in empirical studies of conflict, with the state’s uneven reach playing a mediating role (Buhaug, Gates, and Lujala 2009). Similarly, “friction-of-terrain remoteness” is one of the state-thwarting strategies that according to Scott recalcitrant groups deploy to elude the inconveniences of incorporation into central states (2009, 279).

It is unquestionable that geography can constrain state-building in important ways, a problem that historically was only aggravated by technological limitations. In the newly independent Latin American nations of the early nineteenth century, the combination of complex physical geographies and scarce resources hindered transportation, political integration, and penetration by central states, with only a few exceptions (Whitehead 1994). As Safford writes, “Mexico’s great expanse and Colombia’s topography and climate limited territorial control, delaying the development of relatively effective states until the last decades of the nineteenth century in Mexico and the first decades of the twentieth century in Colombia” (2013, 54). In trying to understand how states grow, govern, and perform in territory, we must therefore place them in proper geographic context.

Yet geography can only take us thus far. Arguments based on the effects of natural barriers and geographic remoteness suffer from problems of structural determinism and leave meaningful spatial and temporal variation unexplained. They fail to account for differences in state capacities across similarly situated regions, changes in internal patterns of stateness over

time, and institutional fragilities in areas that, in principle, states should be able to control with relative ease. Advances in communications and transportation have revolutionized the means available to prevail over distance and penetrate geographic and social space (Maier 2012), yet the performance of states remains spotty and their modes of exercising authority highly irregular.

As I will show using fine-grained, disaggregated data in the empirical sections, even in a country as deeply affected by a complex topography and extensive inhospitable territories as Colombia (see Safford and Palacios 2002), a purely geographic lens misses meaningful variation in domestic patterns of state capacity. In some instances, an unqualified geographic approach can simply be misleading. The Andean highlands in Colombia historically displayed higher levels of state penetration—pace Scott (2009)—than the river valleys or the Eastern Plains. Holding geographic variables constant, sharp variations can also be observed from one Colombian municipality to the next in any given region. In Mexico, the potent Catholic challenge to the postrevolutionary state, crucial in shaping its capacities throughout the twentieth century, came not from the distant and expansive north, once difficult to control. The weak spot instead appeared in the fertile and pious Bajío region in the center-west, an area close to the country's capital where state and Church had put down deep roots in the colonial period—in the words of Meyer, "the center of gravity of Mexican history" (1995, 108).

Apart from physical geography, economic factors are also obvious determinants of patterns of state development across space. State-building efforts in late nineteenth-century Latin America were strongly shaped by economic forces. Internally, power was organized and infrastructures laid following the imperatives of commodity exportation in world markets (Saylor 2014). Earlier in history, institutional developments in territory had obeyed the logic of colonial economic extraction.

More generally, Tilly long noted the links between the concentration of capital in towns and cities and rulers' efforts to get a share of the pie (1992). Similarly, Olsonian revenue-maximizing roving bandits have more incentives to prey upon and turn stationary in wealthier, fiscally promising areas (Olson 1993; see also Levi 1988). States may be content with not governing nor providing any service in "fiscally sterile" areas, "territories considered wastelands" (Scott 2009, 10). These well-established models of the state as an institution that emerges, develops, and gives something in return for the purposes of extraction have clear implications for how we expect them to put down roots across territory. At a basic level, they imply that the spatial distribution of economic activity should influence the allocation of state-building effort, so as to extract, control, and extract more.

However, the development of state capacities across territory is neither an automatic nor a sole reflection of economic factors and extractive impulses. First, incentives to state-build arising from spatial economic structures are necessarily politically mediated. Jumping from economics and rulers' intentions to state capacity outcomes requires an explanation of how interests are formulated, articulated, and transformed into state-building decisions in the political sphere. Independent of what deep factor propels them to extract, rulers need to "work out the politics" to gain the ability to extract, yet "the politics itself is rarely laid bare" (Hoffman 2015, 305).[5]

Second, while greedy rulers' institutional investments across territory may follow wealth, the causal arrows flow in both directions. There is an ongoing and strong reappraisal of state capacity as a key *determinant* of growth in the fields of economic history and development economics (Besley and Persson 2011; Hoffman 2015; Johnson and Koyama 2017). Classic

[5] Hoffman makes this criticism about arguments linking warfare to state capacity, but it can be cast more broadly. For a study that explicitly investigates how politics mediates the relationship between warfare and fiscal state-building, see Saylor and Wheeler (2017).

arguments about the importance of Weberian bureaucracies (Evans and Rausch 1999) or the state's provision of order and property rights for economic prosperity (Bates 2010; North 1990) posit a similar causal ordering, in which state development shapes, not simply tracks, economic variables. These arguments have been typically advanced at the national level, but nothing precludes their logic from operating within national borders. There is indeed evidence that territorial variation in state capacity causally explains within-country differences in economic growth (Acemoglu, García-Jimeno, and Robinson 2015; Acemoglu, Moscona, and Robinson 2016).

Moreover, while theoretical approaches focused on the interaction between abstract rulers and subjects around issues of extraction have produced major insights into state-building processes, it cannot be forgotten that societies are not homogenous entities detached from states, nor are rulers pure revenue maximizers unlinked to social interests. States are built and directed by concrete political elites who care about various goals, have historically defined social constituencies, advance some interests over others, and act in a multiplicity of policy realms out of several types of motivations.

I will thus take economic and geographic factors seriously into account, but center my theoretical attention elsewhere. Without either denying or overlooking their evident importance, I approach the territorial organization of state power from an explicitly *political* angle. I argue (and show empirically) that state-building and state performance within borders are poorly understood without allowing for an autonomous role of politics, whose "essence," in Weberian terms, "is struggle" (M. Weber 1978, 1414).[6] The construction of states is carried out by political actors involved in political battles, and for political purposes. To understand how institutions

[6] The full quote reads: "The essence of politics—as we will have to emphasize time and again—is *struggle*, the recruitment of *allies* and of a *voluntary* following."

formed across territory, what states can(not) accomplish and where, we not only need a topographic or an economic map, but an understanding of the historical conflicts and group oppositions that went into the making of the state.

1.2 Cleavage Structures and State Development

I propose a framework in which the fault lines or "cleavages" that organize group conflict in a polity, especially during formative historical periods, serve as a theoretical foundation to analyze why states develop unevenly across territory and functions. Key to this approach is to first pin down the cleavage concept as employed here, to then explain why it is useful to understand the sequences of institution-building and societal reaction that, I argue, shape state capacity and performance. In a nutshell, I propose that cleavages, as the polarities that define political contestation, influence two key sets of variables: first, the *type* and *location* of institutional investments made by political actors and groups in control of state power during decisive moments; second, the responses to state-building measures among different groups in society, most relevantly those excluded from governing coalitions. State-building projects that unfold in a context of sharp cleavages, which entail high levels of intergroup political polarization, are expected to produce sates with more uneven capacities and performance records.

1.2.1 The cleavage concept

Given that the concept of "cleavage" occupies an important role in the theoretical argument, it is worth elaborating how the term is used in this study, and what kind of social and political dynamics it is meant to capture. Although a vast literature exists on the topic and different authors use the term with somewhat different connotations, at its core it refers to the

dividing lines that *de facto* structure political contestation within a national community (Mair 2006; Roberts 2014, chap. 2). Cleavages define the "system of contrasts" or political oppositions between groups in a polity. They are, so to speak, the coordinates of political conflict. They vary in *content* and *depth* across political systems and over time, but defining them as lasting and salient fractures that organize "membership in 'we' versus 'they' groups" captures the essence of the concept (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, 3). My use of the term concerns these basic "friend-enemy" political distinctions.[7] Deeper or more intense cleavages, under this perspective, imply higher levels of political polarization and hardened political identities.

Cleavages are central to the literature on parties and party systems, where scholars in the sociological tradition have long used the term to refer to sharp social divides—like class, region, ethnicity, or religious affiliation—that become politicized in the electoral arena (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Rokkan 1999). Because these classic works placed an emphasis on a given set of social group distinctions as the raw materials for the construction of political identities, usage of the concept is often mistakenly taken to imply a mechanistic translation of social divisions into political oppositions, and thus criticized for socio-structural reductionism.[8]

However, generally understood as the boundaries that separate individuals and groups into rival political camps, the cleavage concept retains analytical power, without carrying with it an assertion of sociological predetermination of those camps. Put differently, I use the term in a political sense, not as a synonym of structural social differentiation. I further argue that under

[7] The reference is to Carl Schmitt's famous definition of the friend-enemy antithesis as the specific political distinction. For Schmitt, "an enemy exists only when, at least potentially, one fighting collectivity of people confronts a similar collectivity" (2007, 28).
[8] The literature on these issues is too vast to cite here. For an early formulation of this critique, see Sartori (1990).

this definition, cleavage structures hold explanatory potential for outcomes beyond electoral politics, the research area in which they are perhaps more frequently examined.[9]

My understanding of the term also draws on insights from other bodies of research on intergroup relations, mainly in the fields of social psychology and behavioral economics. In fact, it is possible to draw connections between the classic cleavage literature, focused on macro-historical processes of political differentiation in Western Europe, and findings in these alternative research fields, which work at lower levels of analysis. Myriad empirical studies document that group identification has powerful effects on individuals' attitudes and behaviors toward others, depending on which side of the group boundary those others are located. A core insight in this literature is that once membership to a distinctive group is brought to the psychological foreground, individuals are inclined to favor their in-group and display bias against out-group members (Tajfel and Turner 1979, 1986).

This includes increased willingness to emulate and cooperate with fellow group members, make personal sacrifices in the in-group's benefit, conform to group norms and stereotypes, and display hostile attitudes and behavior toward the out-group.[10] Importantly, increasing the salience of a group divide only enhances such biases. These tendencies are observed even in experiments where an arbitrary attribute, unrelated to "deep" sociological distinctions or preexisting grievances, is employed to activate a temporary group boundary (Bourhis and Gagnon 2003; Chen and Li 2009).

In reality, of course, people identify with groups associated with specific histories, experiences, and struggles, and these collective identifications tend to be relatively durable.

[9] A large literature also adopts a cleavage framework to examine ethnicity and civil wars. My discussion below also borrows from this body of work.

[10] Useful survey works in this vast literature include Huddy (2003), Simon and Klandermans (2001), and Worchel and Coutant (2001).

Absent systematic examination of those histories, it is impossible to understand the substantive content of group boundaries across national contexts. This was the distinctive contribution of classic works on cleavage structures in political sociology, then furthered by many others. Findings in behavioral economics and the psychological literature reveal the micro-mechanics of intergroup relations, which we can then examine in a proper, historically-produced social context that stimulates certain identifications or group belongings.

My purpose here is to highlight the pertinence of a general definition of cleavages as the lines that, in practice, demarcate groups that have coalesced politically, independent of whether these conform to some predefined sociodemographic categories, something that can be left to empirical investigation. Notice that this approach also has the crucial advantage of potentially increasing the external validity of the theoretical framework. While the content of cleavages and attendant political identities naturally varies across contexts, we can nevertheless expect the cleavage structure relevant in a given country at critical historical moments to influence state-building patterns across territory, in systematic ways.

Lipset and Rokkan themselves spoke of the possibility of "alignments by strictly political criteria of membership in 'we' versus 'they' groups," as opposed to those following "obvious sociocultural criteria." They explained that political parties, for instance, may "establish themselves as significant poles of attraction and produce their own alignments independently of the geographical, the social, and the cultural underpinnings" (1967, 3). In speaking generally of the sorting of individuals into opposing groups contesting for supremacy, they captured the essence of the cleavage concept as it is employed here: the axes of "us" versus "them" in the political arena, or the dividing lines between in-groups and out-groups, in the language of social psychology.

The complementarity of both approaches lies in their analytical focus on group loyalties and inter-group conflict as basic social phenomena that play a large role in political processes and outcomes. Returning to the level of the nation-state, cleavages thus denote the internal boundaries that demarcate political "others." These antagonisms define what politics is about, and as I will elaborate, can have lasting consequences on the development of the state within its borders. To preview my argument, I suggest that the set of interactions between groups on opposite sides of a cleavage—in particular between those who build the state and those who, while carrying the identification of broad segments of society, are excluded from state-building coalitions—give rise to distinctive patterns of sub-national state capacity.

Numerous scholars have advanced arguments about the process by which certain divides acquire political primacy, thus properly turning into cleavages as defined here. Careful analyses tend to posit a politically-driven (and hence contingent) process of construction and activation of collective identities, in which individuals' social context, shared life experiences, and grievances, play a constraining but not deterministic role (e.g. Kalyvas 1996; Posner 2017; Sambanis and Shayo 2013). Individuals' social environment, ideas, and value orientations interact with the politicization efforts of organizations and movements to ultimately sort them into opposing camps in the political arena.

In this vein, the most elaborate conceptual formulations in the sociological tradition contend that cleavages comprise three elements: a socio-structural referent; an embodiment in concrete social and political organizations; and a cultural-ideational representation, by which group identities are constructed as such and become associated with specific attitudes, values, symbols, and belief systems (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Mair 2006). This strict three-dimensional conceptualization represents an ideal-type. Fully-formed cleavages rank high in all three

properties, but for analytical and empirical purposes the development of each dimension can be seen as varying along a continuum (Roberts 2002).

These three components will become useful in discussing why cleavage structures can shape episodes of state-building and thus translate into patterns of state capacity, and why these patterns may persist over time. As I will explain in more detail, social dynamics generated by deep cleavages can operate as mechanisms connecting the "system of oppositions" in place at a relevant state-building juncture to subsequent measures of state performance. These cleavage-related dynamics include the encapsulation into parallel organizational networks, the reproduction of group identities, and the association of these identities with a set of attitudes, interests, and behaviors that may prove resistant to change, even as circumstances vary.

This serves to highlight another important feature of the cleavage concept as defined here, which is that it implies a certain durability as an organizing political boundary. The intensity of polarization or conflict around a cleavage may vary over time, and in the long run a given divide may cease to demarcate contesting political camps, thus losing its character as a cleavage. However, cleavages are distinct from episodic differences of opinion or transient divisions that do not develop into proper polarities. They thus denote a *system* of contrasts capable of producing enduring patterns of group identification and repeated, dialectical interaction. This means that cleavages do not simply entail difference, but political camps that are *at odds* with each other, indeed that can be said to *need* of each other for self-definition.

In the rest of the study, I will also borrow from the three dimensions mentioned above to characterize the historical cleavages or oppositions relevant to each of my two country cases. It should be noted at the outset, however, that the theoretical and empirical contributions of this study lie in specifying the *effects* of sharp cleavages on the process and outcomes of state

formation, not in how cleavages come into being. Specifically, I will develop the argument that the cleavage structures prevalent during critical historical moments shape the decisions of governing coalitions about how and where to state-build, as well as the reactions to those investments among different segments of society. In advancing this argument, I pay close attention to the constitution and features of the cleavages that serve as explanatory factors in my cases. I make no general theoretical attempt, however, at specifying the conditions under which particular divides become politically activated and outweigh others. The construction of states, not cleavages, is at issue here.

A final consideration about the relationship between cleavages and violent conflict is necessary before delving into the theoretical argument. The question is of substantive theoretical interest but also directly relevant to my cases. As I explain in subsequent chapters, in both Mexico and Colombia I trace patterns of state development to cleavages that, in periods of varying durability across the cases, manifested in serious political violence, including outright civil wars.

As salient political boundaries, cleavages involve, by definition, contrasts in political preferences between groups who strive to alter the balance of power in society. Yet each group does not just hold different preferences or views; it wants to make them authoritative, to make them govern the functioning of the whole. The distinctions may concern fundamental principles and values, the allocation of material goods to some (but not all), or other factors, but the key issue is that advancing them *entails political struggle*. And in political struggle, violence is a latent possibility. Although clearly not all cleavages erupt into violence, greater incompatibility of preferences and higher levels of intergroup hostility—that is, deeper cleavages—can be

expected to increase the risk of violent conflict, especially when state institutions are still in an early formative stage.[11]

It is also well-understood that violence itself can reinforce group attachments and accentuate "us" versus "them" boundaries, a process that has been most analyzed with reference to ethnic cleavages (e.g. Sambanis and Shayo 2013). In this sense, the relationship between violence and cleavage depth is bidirectional. Violent conflict deepens the grievances attributed to the out-group and increases in-group solidarity, thus helping collective identification patterns to congeal. A heightened sense of group membership in turn reproduces intergroup biases over time and potentially facilitates future rounds of political mobilization. Empirical studies have documented that the reinforcing effects of violence on political identities—and on resulting attitudes and behaviors toward in-group and out-group members—may remain visible across generations, as loyalties are transmitted through families and social networks (Lupu and Peisakhin forthcoming; Rozenas, Schutte, and Zhukov forthcoming; Wittenberg 2006).

In my examination of the religious and the partisan polarities in Mexico and Colombia, respectively, I discuss such kinds of two-way interactions between cleavage-based identities and political violence. More importantly, political identities, partly constituted and heightened by historical violence, play a key role in my theoretical argument. They explain durable attitudes and behaviors toward the state which, in turn, help account for differences in state performance. Moreover, in empirical tests concerning the case of Mexico, I exploit the translation of the

[11] Historical timing and sequence are therefore relevant. A state that has already attained a monopoly over the means of violence and developed comprehensive capacities can prevent large-scale armed challenges from opponents, and generally prevent the violent escalation of intergroup conflicts even under high polarization. In addition, power-sharing arrangements and inclusive political institutions that broadly represent contending groups may help manage sharp cleavages and even reduce preference incompatibility (for a recent example of this large literature, see Wucherpfennig, Hunziker, and Cederman 2016). However, in contexts where state institutions are inchoate, acute polarization and deep cleavages between groups are more likely to erupt into violence. This situation describes Mexico and Colombia in the historical periods analyzed in this study.

religious cleavage into violent conflict in the 1920s to operationalize the underlying religious cleavage. Overall, political violence is therefore a centerpiece of my account of Mexican and Colombian state formation.

However, as should be clear from this introduction, the historical instances of cleavage-related violence are in each case best understood in their broader context of political enmity. From a theoretical standpoint, they constitute crucial but not exclusive pieces of a deep power struggle that structured political affiliations, attitudes, and choices throughout formative institutional periods. Mexican revolutionary anticlericals and political Catholics, and Colombian Liberals and Conservatives, were collective antagonists locked in a sequential, dialectical confrontation that produced quite violent episodes (more so in Colombia). However, these collective antagonisms also found continued expression in nonviolent forms of contestation, and they predated and outlived any single instance of violent fighting (see Tarrow 2007, 589).[12] States (and their capacities) took form, territorially, over the course of these dualistic conflicts involving both peaceful dispute and bloodshed. The argument I present therefore properly concerns the impact of cleavage structure on the construction of the state in territory, not solely the state-institutional legacies of civil war.

I return to this theme in subsequent chapters, where I make practical but historically-grounded decisions to make cleavage structures empirically tractable. Now, having cleared the conceptual terrain, I develop the theoretical argument linking the state's uneven development to cleavage politics.

[12] I am borrowing from Tarrow's warning that "hiving off civil wars from other forms of contention" risks "reifying the category of civil war and downplaying the relationship between insurgencies and 'lesser' forms of contention."

1.2.2 Cleavages and the Ins and Outs of State-building Coalitions

The cases of Colombia and Mexico share a crucial commonality: important historical moments in the formation of the state, when efforts were made to build up its capacities for extraction, coercion, and control, were also moments of intense domestic polarization and conflict. Their states were built upon divided grounds. In the conceptual terms outlined above, state-building took place in a context of sharp cleavages. The central argument of this study is that these early political struggles shaped the territorial formation of the state in systematic ways and across various types of capacities, leaving a durable mark in patterns of state performance.

My approach is based on the premises that, in any given time or place, it is specific sociopolitical coalitions and political elites that give agency to the state, and that the composition of these coalitions is not irrelevant. Though this may seem uncontroversial, plenty of state-building models in political economy instead start from generic revenue-maximizing rulers interacting with a homogenous citizenry in abstract settings, as discussed above (e.g. Acemoglu 2005). I emphasize that state-builders and their supporting coalitions are embedded in a structure of political oppositions and make *politically* motivated decisions—in the sense of partisanship and struggle—about the development of state capabilities. Because the state is a vehicle to exercise power over others and advance political ends, I highlight the importance of analyzing *who* state-built and in the context of which conflicts, in order to understand how the state came to be as it is, what it can accomplish, and where. In his work on the modern state, Michael Mann called to "make clear who this Leviathan is: Who controls it? Who is doing what to whom?" (2012, 359). I take Mann's call seriously and show how it matters for the state's development within its borders.

I argue that the struggles between rival political groups can propel uneven state-building and spawn lasting domestic contrasts in state performance, especially when formative institutional periods are ridden by high levels of political polarization or deep cleavages. The key reasons are that, under these conditions, foundational investments in institutions across territory, and the ties that emerge between state and society, which affect compliance, vary sharply along lines of political identity. This general argument has potential implications for two different levels of analysis: the *cross*-national and the *sub*-national. This study concentrates squarely on the latter, but for the sake of argument it is worth sketching how the two levels are connected under my theoretical framework.

The implications at the first level concern the conditions under which state-building projects are likely to be more successful in producing well-formed states, possessing comprehensive capacities throughout their territory and commanding broad compliance. Stated as above, the argument implies that the higher the levels of polarization during the period in which state institutions are born and develop their basic features, the more pronounced the partisan biases in state capacity investments and in societal compliance can be expected to be. In turn, more auspicious conditions for coherent state development may exist when unifying forces, like war against a common external enemy, reduce the intensity of domestic intergroup conflict during state-building.

This perspective about the effects of internal cohesion is compatible with prominent arguments in the state-building literature, as I explain below. Several classic and recent works suggest that the degree of domestic polarization matters for how the state develops. However, the point often appears only implicitly in narratives about successful cases. When explicitly manifested, arguments have tended to stop at the general point that greater domestic

homogeneity or cohesion facilitates state-building, implying that more divided polities see little institutional improvements and, in competitive international environments, are eliminated (e.g. Gennaioli and Voth 2015). With few exceptions, notably Slater's work on counterrevolutionary Leviathans (2010), the ways in which polarization and internal conflict may themselves stimulate certain kinds of state development have received less attention.[13]

Moreover, this line of reasoning has not been pursued beyond the national level, to examine how deep domestic cleavages impact the construction of state capabilities internally. As I have argued, this is a crucial political process in and of itself. My unique contribution is thus to illuminate how internal political conflicts occurring early in the process of state building shape institutional development within a country's borders.

Let us start by showing how the existing literature suggests a relationship between the depth of domestic cleavages and state-building processes, if sometimes only indirectly. Dominant approaches to the study of state formation emphasize external pressures that push rulers to build institutions. In the most extended formulation, identified with the work of Tilly,

[13] Slater argues that when major popular contention threatened elites before the consolidation of authoritarian rule in Southeast Asia, elites forged "protection pacts" and erected powerful, authoritarian party-states to counter mobilization from below. While I share Slater's emphasis on domestic contention as an engine for investments in state capacity, my argument differs in three main ways.

First, whereas he analyzes state-building as an elite reaction to mass contentious politics, my argument refers to intergroup cleavages that run through the society and need not take the form of fearful counterrevolutionary elites versus mobilized masses. Put differently, Slater is concerned with "vertical" elite-mass conflicts, whereas I focus on "horizontal" cleavages between opposing collectivities that enlist each broad segments of society. Relatedly, I leave aside questions of political regime, whereas Slater analyzes the joint outcome of state development and authoritarian durability in his cases.

Second, I analyze the uneven development of the state *within* its territory as a result of sharp cleavages that affect both state-building efforts *and* societal compliance, whereas he explains *cross-country* variation and focuses primarily on the first component—namely, the conditions that push elites to invest in state capacity, somewhat assuming that those investments succeed and produce the intended effects in society.

Third, I disaggregate state capacity into various dimensions and show the distinctive ways in which cleavages shape each. Slater approaches state power mainly as a combination of coercion and extraction, arguing that they jointly serve to consolidate authoritarian rule.

capable states were born in war (1975, 1992).[14] The mechanics are well-known. Rulers at constant war were compelled to extract revenues and accumulate coercive means. Out of ambition and fear, they raised armies, set up fiscal systems, subordinated rival internal powerholders, and erected central administrative structures with extensive territorial control. Among those that did not perish, successful institution-building enabled further war-making, thus keeping the cycle in motion. Because sustaining war efforts involved predation and many "invasions of small-scale social life" that sparked resistance (Tilly 1992, 25), rulers had to make concessions to the ruled. Over the course of history, these sequential bargains gave rise to new state structures that strengthened popular control and enhanced public good provision. Incessant war and preparation for war thus engendered competent and far-reaching states, which brought with them taxes, conscription, and surveillance, but also representation and citizenship rights (Levi 1988, 1997; Tarrow 2015; Tilly 1998, 2007).

The vast literature that has followed this bellicist approach offers a range of mechanisms that link external threat to highly capable states. For analytical purposes, we can classify them under two main types.[15] The most commonly invoked associate the fiscal-military pressures involved in war-making to institutional creation, innovation, and reform within the governmental apparatus itself (Ertman 1997). Rulers not only created new far-reaching state structures. In order to effectively fight wars, they implemented measures to solve principal-agent problems in tax extraction, professionalized coercive bodies, rationalized administrations, made their societies more legible, and took steps toward greater centralization and bureaucratization. These reforms,

[14] For critiques and elaborations focused on Europe, see among others (Ertman 1997; Gorski 2003). Recent works emphasizing the importance of warfare for state development include (Besley and Persson 2011; Karaman and Pamuk 2013; Scheve and Stasavage 2016). For a review, see (Dincecco 2015). The main studies examining state-building in Latin America in dialogue with the bellicist approach are those of Centeno (1997, 2002). See also (Thies 2005). For Africa, see (Dincecco, Fenske, and Gaetano Onorato 2016; Herbst 2000).

[15] Soifer (2016b) employs a similar classification of intra-state versus society-based mechanisms in his review of the literature on failed state-building.

taking place over a long historical period, ultimately made state organizations more modern and effective at implementing decisions, an institutional inheritance that future rulers could redeploy for other governance purposes. The first set of mechanisms in bellicist theory thus points to the growth of available governing infrastructure and the intra-state improvements in public administration triggered by military competition.

However, other arguments suggest that this is only part of the explanation for the emergence of high-performing states in threatening international environments. Another set of mechanisms looks beyond the state itself and toward society. There is an important body of work that, though not always focused on state capacity outcomes, examines how external warfare alters societal dynamics, patterns of social identification, and state-society relations. Several studies trace links between war and the forging of national identities (e.g. Posen 1993; Wimmer 2013). In this same area, Darden and Mylonas argue that threats to a country's territorial integrity push state elites to pursue nation-building in order to generate internal cohesion, which results in more developed national institutions and lower linguistic diversity (2016). For Sambanis et al., victory in war can help induce national identification and cooperation between rival domestic groups, a potential benefit that leads rulers to fight wars they believe winnable in order to reap these benefits (Sambanis, Skaperdas, and Wohlforth 2015).

The relevant lesson of these works, for the issue that concerns us, is that external threats and common struggles can induce shifts in patterns of political identification and in levels of internal cohesion that are favorable to coherent state-building.[16] Interstate warfare may aid state development because it reduces the intensity and salience of domestic cleavages, instead

[16] A similar logic underlies the work of Besley and Persson, who use external war as a measure of common interests and argue that these lead to greater investments in fiscal and legal capacity. More heterogeneous interests instead discourage state development because groups in society fear greater redistribution from a stronger state when they are out of power (2011).

activating a collective sense of "we" that makes citizens more willing to cooperate with rulers and with each other, in order to confront an external enemy. If a threat to the whole is sufficiently strong, the salient boundaries of "us" versus "them" shift from the inside to the outside. Antagonism is directed to the international arena. The set of attitudes and behaviors associated with group identity become in such cases favorable to the emergence of institutions with comprehensive capacities across geographical and social space, as the in-group versus out-group boundaries are made to coincide with those of the nation-state.

To be sure, the occurrence of external warfare is not equivalent to the cessation of domestic politics. State-builders may take advantage of wars to lock in their partisan interests, for example by implementing fiscal policies that are necessary to fight but simultaneously advance the distributive interests of core constituencies (Flores-Macías and Kreps 2013). Moreover, wars and internal contention are interlocking processes, as rulers and their populations bargain over the restriction and expansion of rights during and after war efforts (Tarrow 2015). The point here is that fighting external enemies has the potential of reducing polarization and activating collective processes that do not respond narrowly or solely to the logic of internal antagonisms. Groups that, in terms of the dominant domestic cleavage, do not identify with the coalition in power may nevertheless be more willing to cooperate with state-building measures directed toward a common objective. By reducing the salience of internal fractures and inducing greater inter-group cooperation across cleavage lines, warfare can create opportunities for state-building backed by broad societal compliance.

Not all wars may produce such a rally-around-the-flag effect, especially if not commonly perceived as a fundamental threat across sides of a cleavage. Only when opposing political groups in a polity come to see an external state or actor as an "other" that needs to be combated,

and thereby a collective identity acquires primacy, can we properly argue that the resulting increase in internal cohesion aids coherent state-building. However, large-scale wars of mass mobilization and even some decolonization struggles arguably produced effects in this direction, activating a sense of shared purpose and reducing the impact of domestic rivalries on patterns of state-building.

Empirical studies provide support for this view. Using cross-country data on interstate conflicts from 1970 onwards, for example, Feldman and Slemrod find that the number and length of international conflicts faced by a country is positively related with attitudes toward tax compliance (2009). Scholars have also found that concern for international issues increases trust in government (Hetherington and Rudolph 2008), which has been found to bolster citizen compliance and thus improve state performance (Levi, Sacks, and Tyler 2009). It is also telling that it took major world wars that threatened their very existence for countries to erect comprehensive welfare regimes, funded with taxes raised broadly across societies and administered by large state structures. Sharp internal polarization along class cleavages, by itself, failed to produce this outcome (Berman 2006; Scheve and Stasavage 2010, 2016).[17] In a similar vein, Sparrow, noting the "massification" of fiscal citizenship obligations in the U.S. during World War II, highlights "how the extraordinary state-building of the period was accomplished with so little opposition" (2008, 265). Comparing subnational units, Singh argues that higher levels of collective solidarity—which in terms of my argument entail lower polarization and less intense cleavages—are positively related to public good provision and welfare outcomes across India (2015).

[17] Speaking of the consolidation of social democratic states in Europe, Berman writes "both a strong, interventionist state and generous, universalistic welfare policies...depend on the support of a citizenry driven by *a high degree of fellow feeling* and *a sense of shared purpose*" (2006, 214–15). Emphasis added.

Overall, we can appreciate from these arguments that the intensity of domestic political oppositions is an important variable in processes of state-building. Governments' investments in state capacity and societal attitudes toward the state, both of which have a key impact on institutional performance, can vary systematically depending on what types of group identifications acquire primacy (domestic group versus collective) and how deep inter-group divides are. This is of special importance during formative periods of the state apparatus. There is a broad consensus that there are decisive episodes or "critical junctures" in the formation of institutions, when political actors make foundational decisions and key events mold the political future. States carry with them deep historical legacies (Centeno, Yashar, and Kohli 2017; Kurtz 2013; Soifer 2016b)—they are "institutions with considerable historical momentum" (Slater and Fenner 2011, 16).

With high internal polarization and rigid domestic-group political identities—that is, in a situation of deep cleavages—societal compliance with state-building measures varies sharply along cleavage lines, depending on who governs and attempts to strengthen the state. If this occurs during the early stages of state formation, it may produce uneven patterns of state development that mirror internal cleavages (and decrease national state capacity averages). In contrast, in contexts of greater political cohesion during formative periods, less resistance from society and less partisan state-building measures allow for the construction of a common institutional core capable of sustaining further development of state capacity. A more competent state with far-reaching capacities can thus emerge.

In his classic work on Latin American state-building in the nineteenth century, Centeno argued that the weakness of interstate military competition, unlike the Darwinian Western European experience, explains why states in the region failed to develop high state capacity

(2002; Centeno and Ferraro 2013, 7). The mobilization of Latin American populations around collective war efforts was just too weak and infrequent to set off cycles of extraction and institution-building. In the terms of my argument, the lack of sustained external pressures created few instances of state-building in which the political "other" was a foreign enemy, rather than an internal political rival. Indeed, peaceful international relations allowed internal political antagonisms to reproduce without restraint, as reflected in the high incidence of civil wars throughout the region in the nineteenth century. Few state-building projects were minimally collective enterprises, and their partisan features prevented broad-based collaboration from society. This dynamic, according to my theoretical framework, plays a key role in explaining the outcome of relatively low levels of state capacity highlighted by Centeno.

Two examples from the countries examined in this study serve to illustrate the point. Mexico might seem to challenge my argument that international relations did not work to reduce the intensity of domestic cleavages, which in turn became an obstacle to coherent state-building.

Two major international wars took place in the nineteenth century, namely the Mexican-American War (1846-48) and the French Intervention. The latter conflict claimed some forty to fifty thousand lives (Rugeley and Fallaw 2012, 5) and resulted in the three-year empire of Maximilian of Habsburg (1864-1867).

Yet on deeper examination, it is clear that the French-supported intervention was not a motive for national cohesion and mutual collaboration, but in fact a new round in the deep Liberal-Conservative antagonism that structured domestic politics in the nineteenth century. Many Conservatives, defeated by Liberals in the War of the Reform (1857-1860), supported and even actively promoted the imposition of a foreign monarchy, along with the Catholic Church. For Conservatism, one of the two dominant political forces in the country at the time, external

intervention was not a threat that merited cooperation with Liberals to defend the nation-state, but rather a much-desired restoration of monarchical order. The case thus confirms, more than invalidates, that external wars failed to reduce domestic polarization, which prevented broad-based state-building.

The brief Colombia-Peru War (1932-33) over a piece of territory in Colombia's southern border offers another good example of the connections between sharp domestic cleavages, external pressures, and uneven state formation. The war motivated the adoption of new taxes under a Liberal government (Junguito and Rincón 2007, 249) and produced a brief outbreak of popular nationalism(Deas 2015, 24; Weinert 1966).[18] Archival sources also indicate that it led the Colombian government to plan large-scale construction of infrastructure in the largely abandoned Amazonas region.[19] The conflict, however, was too short-lived to sustain collective efforts of this type. Liberal-Conservative enmity quickly and forcefully resurfaced as the dominant political opposition and the source of identification for Colombians. This cleavage, as I show in the empirical chapters, produced sharp variation in state capacity across Colombia's municipalities, based on their partisan affiliation.

I have explained how my theoretical framework, centered on the intensity of domestic political conflict, fits into broader accounts about the emergence of well-formed states. Yet because most arguments are pitched at the cross-national level, the only logical conclusion we can draw thus far is that polities in which state-building projects were associated with high levels of intergroup political polarization should display lower average levels of stateness, as internal

[18] Speaking about partisan clashes after the 1930 Colombian presidential election, Weinert writes: "The violence of the 1930s was short-lived, however. One reason was a brief war with Peru in 1932 which *elevated nationalist over partisan passions* and drew attention from local violence" (1966, 342). Emphasis added.

[19] Archivo General de la Nación, Bogotá. Personal documents of Alfonso Araujo Gaviria, volume 15. Memorandums and communications between the Minister of War and the Minister of Public Works and expenditures reports from the Ministry of War.

antagonism stunts coherent institutional development. But as argued above, Latin American states are not simply weak, they are highly *uneven*. They possess certain capacities in certain areas of their territory, but are unable to sustain them throughout the realm, achieve a relatively uniform performance, or participate in people's daily lives in consistent ways.

To explain this distinctive type of institutional development we must examine the relationship between domestic cleavages and state capacity *within* countries. Instead of stopping at the country level, the unevenness that we observe merits a theoretical focus on subnational variation. I argue that examining the structure and intensity of internal political oppositions equips us to explain the development of the state within its borders. Analytically, state formation comprises two main sets of processes. First, the adoption by those who hold power of policies to increase the capacities of the governing apparatus; second, the responses of the governed to rulers' measures and intentions. When sharp cleavages form in a polity, intergroup struggles powerfully shape both sets of processes and result in subnational patterns of state capacity that reflect the underlying political antagonisms. Importantly, if core state structures are still inchoate, the prevailing cleavages during formative institutional episodes will mark the construction of those basic state pillars.

Let us analyze the first component. I argue that rather than purely inhibiting institutional development, strong polarization between "us" versus "them" political camps can stimulate state-building, yet of certain characteristics. The reason is straightforward: a stronger state represents, for those who control it, a more powerful vehicle to impose their will upon others, *and this is most desired when the conflict with the enemy is most intense*.[20] It may seem paradoxical that the conditions of polarization and deep conflict that have been thought to *hinder*

[20] The first sentence paraphrases Weber: "as an instrument for 'societalizing' relations of power, bureaucracy has been and is a power instrument of the first order—for the one who controls the bureaucratic apparatus" (1991, 228).

state-building are simultaneously considered to be *favorable* to the development of other key institutions in modern societies, namely, political parties (Levitsky et al. 2016; Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Shefter 1994). The paradox dissolves, however, if we consider that polarized conflict can spawn institution-building efforts that span the state, but also that under such conditions *investments in state capacity respond heavily to partisan, group-based considerations*. It is therefore crucial to consider who builds the state and who are the political enemies, that is, who are the included or excluded elements of society in a coalition that sets out to strengthen the state in a particular domain.

State-building is a process of institutional transformation that sets new objectives and purposes for governing authorities, provides them with greater tools to accomplish them, and establishes new criteria about the proper behavior of the ruled. Those definitions about what the state will do and how people are to behave do not simply entail a coordination problem (Moe 2005).[21] They are not politically neutral, in the sense of being detached from political enmities or group attempts to subordinate the rest of the society to their will. To the contrary, they are fundamentally informed by the views and interests of ruling elites and their sociopolitical coalitions, which are not equally accepted across the society. These views and interests are, in fact, defined in contraposition to those of others.[22] In a polarized polity where political-group identifications are strong, state-building measures are part of a struggle for supremacy. For the political group in government, part of the rationale for strengthening the state machinery is to

[21] This borrows from Moe's critique that most rational choice theories, despite seemingly addressing questions of political power, in reality tend to explain the origins and functioning of political institutions as power-free solutions to coordination problems, failing to capture their essence as imposed arrangements by winners upon losers. As I have argued throughout this chapter, many recent studies that conceive state capacity as essentially welfare-enhancing are vulnerable to a similar critique. They present states—in Moe's terms—as structures that "resolve collective action problems and benefit all concerned" and less so as "structures of power" (2005, 215).

[22] I am deliberately speaking of "views" and "interests" in a general way in this theoretical chapter to accommodate the possibility of many different types of distinctions serving as a basis for the structuration of rival political groups.

possess a more effective instrument to make its own politically contested interests and goals prevail—that is, to decisively alter the balance of power in its favor.

They key point is that ruling elites launch and direct state-building projects in conflict with a political "other," a political collectivity that in holding opposite preferences about the governing of the whole and the uses of state power, anchors the opposite side of a cleavage. This is a crucial feature of state-building efforts. They pursue the subordination or defeat of a particular political enemy, which makes the analysis of the development of state capacity inseparable from the analysis of the political ends of those who seek to use the state.

State-building choices during formative historical periods therefore respond strongly to the political conflicts in which governing elites and their social bases are immersed, the more so when the contradictions between the opposing camps are more acute (i.e., the deeper the cleavage). This has immediate consequences for how we expect state-building policies to be designed and investments in governing infrastructure to be allocated. When the cleavage between insiders and outsiders to the governing coalition manifests geographically—that is, when collective support for each camp is unevenly distributed throughout the territory, as is commonly the case—state-builders' adherence to partisan-political criteria translates into differential state action across territory. In other words, it shapes the spatial *location* of institutional investments in ruling infrastructure. Politically-aligned areas are likely to be treated systematically different by state-builders than those where opponents hold greater sway.

The structure of political antagonisms also shapes the *type* of institutional investments. During state-building, governing coalitions are likely to concentrate capacities to constrain contention, dissidence, and political participation in rival areas of the territory. The possible tools include institutions to exercise coercion, mechanisms of surveillance, and alliances with locally-

based coercion-wielders, but also ideological and cultural strategies to reshape identities and beliefs. Revolutionary states, run by committed elites and supported by mobilized popular coalitions, have been particularly inclined to supplement coercive capacity with these more ambitious and insidious tools for social control. The empirical chapters examine the structuring effects of cleavages on the development of coercive capacity and also on policies for social penetration.

The specific combination of capacities cultivated by state-builders to deal with political out-groups will inevitably depend upon a host of case-specific, contextual factors. In the empirical chapters, for example, I show that in the scenario of postrevolutionary Mexico, state elites allied with local rural militias to surveil communities and coercively break Catholic opposition; simultaneously, they aggressively pushed land reform and secular education in Catholic areas to sap resistance. In Colombia's electorally competitive environment, conversely, Conservatives used their control over the construction of the education system to foster literacy in their own strongholds and suppress it in Liberal areas. This was a viable means to contain Liberalism in this context given existing literacy restrictions on the right to vote. The relevant point is that all these strategies require their own institutional apparatuses which, given limited resources and partisan interests, are strategically deployed in territory following cleavage lines.

In laying different institutional foundations across territory and arenas of state power, these early distributive decisions can profoundly shape subsequent trajectories, crystallizing into historically-grounded patterns of unevenness in the available instruments of rule (offices, personnel, resources, etc.). Differences in state physical infrastructure, once generated, tend to persist. Bureaucratic inertia, continuity in budgetary spending patterns (e.g. Huillery 2009), and the vested interests created within state organizations incline them to exhibit path-dependence

(Pierson 2004). In the long-run, small changes made to respond to new pressures and necessities may add up and erode existing patterns. New rounds of major state-building or institutional "big bangs" (Centeno, Yashar, and Kohli 2017, 9) are another possible route to change.

In everyday politics, however, there are important forces pushing towards persistence. Governments can fine-tune the state machinery, but even skillful reformers are constrained by what they inherit. In this sense, territorial patterns in the presence and resources of different state apparatuses, which affect how the state routinely governs and what it can accomplish across territory, may long outlive the historical conflicts that engendered them. *This continuity in the architecture of the state is thus one possible mechanism connecting historical state-building decisions, shaped by political antagonisms, to persistent state capacity outcomes.*

An important point is that this general logic, by which the cleavage structure in which state-building coalitions are embedded shapes early arrangements that evolve into durable patterns of state activity, may apply not to the state apparatus as a whole, but to particular parts of functions.[23] Any country's particular experience of state formation follows an identifiable chronology, with important institutional moments typically occurring during and after wars, liberation from a foreign power, revolutions, and so forth. There is a broad consensus, for example, that the two decades following the armed phase of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917) were critical in the formation of the core structures of the modern Mexican state.

However, not all parts of the state may develop at the same pace or in the same cycle, which extends the relevant question from *who built* the state to *who built what part* of its apparatus. To offer another concrete example, in the empirical chapters I show that the dominant Liberal-Conservative cleavage in Colombian politics shaped state capacity outcomes in both

[23] Here I draw on Braddick (2004), who makes this point in his discussion of the inconsistent chronologies offered in the literature about the formation of the English state.

education and taxation. Yet while Liberals pushed forward with investments in the state's fiscal capacity in the 1930s, which strengthened the fiscal state disproportionately in Liberal areas due to strong Conservative resistance, it was the Conservatives who dominated the education state, to Liberals' detriment.

The above discussion highlights how deep cleavages can structure governing coalitions' efforts to develop state capacity. In a polarized society, the geographic distribution of support for opposing political groups shapes the incentives to invest in different types of institutions and allocate material and human resources necessary for governing across regions. This is, in my theoretical framework, one of the paths leading to the rise of uneven states.

Yet a pure focus on the state machinery and state-builders' intentions is insufficient to account for the observed subnational contrasts in stateness. States are not, so to speak, simply uneven by design. While the system of oppositions in which rulers build the state leads them to make uneven institutional investments, states' actual performance is not a simple function of rulers' plans or intentions. Patterns in state development are also affected by the ways in which individuals and groups in society make claims on the state and respond to authorities' efforts at shaping their behavior. The actual ability of the state to do certain things, indeed the very content of state action, is a joint outcome of top-down and bottom-up forces that escape the will and purposes of state-builders. In this sense, states *form* unevenly rather than simply being *made* unevenly.

Cleavages, as the set of salient political oppositions, also structure this second component of state formation, which takes us beyond the resources and features of the governing apparatus itself into the realm of state-society relations. I argue that the lines of political antagonism during formative institutional periods carry over into the ability of emerging states to link to different

groups in society. When the camps on opposite sides of a cleavage carry, each, the identification of sizable segments of the population, polarization can severely hamper the ability of rulers to secure broad compliance with state-building measures. *The deeper the cleavage, the less a forming state's claim to legitimate authority is likely to resonate among members of the group(s) that is excluded from the state-building coalition*.

With starker "us" versus "them" alignments, the out-group(s) of state-building processes develop an adversarial, oppositional relationship with the state. Because one political camp factiously commands the state, seeking to strengthen it to achieve supremacy, impose its will on the whole, and accomplish essentially partisan ends, state-building measures become themselves a source of intergroup contestation and grievance. Among the out-group, political identity combines with distrust and negative attitudes toward state institutions, which predispose its members toward noncompliance. As explained above, sequences of resistance and repression may further harden group identification and resentment, especially when they escalate into serious violence.

In the extreme, anti-state cultural norms, values, and patterns of behavior may become integral part of the identity of the politically excluded group. This imbrication, in turn, undermines state performance in parts of the territory where support for the out-group is stronger, and across governance functions that depend heavily on societal acceptance of state authority. Ultimately, because political identities and concomitant attitudes and behaviors can be transmitted across generations, subnational variation in state strength may lastingly reflect the geography of historical cleavages.

The various steps in this argument merit further elaboration. A central premise of this part of the theoretical framework is that states significantly depend on societal assent, "quasi-

voluntary compliance" (Levi 1988), even legitimacy to effectively carry out complex governance tasks throughout territory and society.[24] Force is, by definition, the ultimate means that states possess to generate compliance. However, the pure threat of coercion is an unviable foundation for an effective state, one that can routinely, consistently, and meaningfully shape behavior and intervene in everyday life—for example, by collecting substantial amounts in taxes. High-performing states function by eliciting broad respect, cooperation, and a sense of obligation from the governed. Their myriad rules and directives are observed without constant recourse to coercion, and not only out of the fear of being sanctioned, narrow self-interested calculations, or short-term evaluations of government performance. A high degree of stateness therefore not only entails organizational muscle, but the integration of broadly shared notions of responsibility and obligation into citizenship.

This, of course, is a description of an ideal-type. Every political order rests on the threat of coercion. It is nevertheless clear that the willingness to follow along with state authorities varies across contexts, and this predisposition conditions what states can accomplish, how they govern, and what they need to do to implement decisions. Empirical studies confirm that compliance, or the process by which individuals adapt their conduct to conform to laws and regulations issued by state authorities, flows from several types of motivations. Importantly, broad and sustained societal compliance is achieved not simply via instrumental calculations about the likelihood of punishment for rule-breaking and the personal benefits of rule-following, but through normative judgments and feelings of obligation that are encapsulated in the concept of legitimacy (Tyler 2006).

[24] Many scholars have argued that state performance rests heavily on voluntary compliance or other proximate concepts (e.g. Levi 1988, 1997; Lieberman 2003). My discussion on legitimacy and consent (which are, of course, contested concepts) in the following paragraphs draws mainly on (Braddick 2004, chap. 2; Hechter 2013, 14–24, 40–41; Knight 2002; Levi, Sacks, and Tyler 2009; Tyler 2006).

Although legitimacy is a contested concept, in almost any formulation it denotes the situation in which citizens grant validity to state claims to authority and thus feel an internal obligation to honor regulations even without the anticipation of immediate rewards or sanctions.[25] Uncovering motivations for abiding behavior is empirically difficult, but systemic noncompliance and "collective resistance...can only indicate the absence of rulers' legitimacy" (Hechter 2013, 21).

Core state-building processes and state tasks, including collecting taxes, maintaining order, monopolizing the means of coercion, and imparting justice, are facilitated when the belief that state authorities are entitled to be obeyed is widespread among the ruled. Put differently, state strength implies compliance, and compliance is aided by the perception that state authorities are justified in issuing and enforcing regulations that individuals are responsible for observing. The fact that considerations about approval/acceptance of state rule, consent, and legitimacy are difficult to grasp empirically does not make them less important in evaluating the strength of the state. States that fail to cultivate a normative sense of duty broadly in the society are unable to achieve and sustain high levels of performance.

Thus we can say that the strength and "stamina" (Knight 2002, 238) of the state depend heavily on the breadth, quality, and density of its linkages to society. As Mann explained, the acquisition of "infrastructural power" by modern states, the kind of power that allows them to perform effectively across territory and functional domains without naked force, involves "a tightening state-society relation" (2012, 61). The interpenetration of state and society is a staple feature of successful processes of state formation. Areas of social life that were previously

[25] Some authors would prefer the Gramscian notion of hegemony to the proximate Weberian concept of legitimacy. Although the terms carry somewhat different connotations, they both serve to convey the basic idea that power relations, including those between state and subjects/citizens, vary in the degree to which they are based on coercion and immediate instrumental calculation, or consent. This is my interest here.

lightly touched by the state, if at all, are brought into its effective reach. States that integrate society into broad-based institutions and forge ties with associations and networks that span wide sections of the population can, through these linkages, better communicate with society, discipline behavior, and cultivate legitimacy.

In contrast, those that put down only shallow roots, even when they build up robust apparatuses and material capabilities, are vulnerable to poor performance in activities that demand sacrifice or willing collaboration from citizens, like taxation or routine policing. They may also face sudden episodes of mass disobedience.[26] To the extent that they are unable to tap into a reservoir of social assent, their authority rests exclusively on the credibility of their punishment threats and their promises of short-term rewards.

Such processes of state-society linkage can vary subnationally and help explain why states form unevenly. In situations when the state apparatus is thoroughly colonized by a political force that is locked into a power struggle with another significant domestic bloc, the ability of the state to tie into different segments of society varies systematically along cleavage lines. *The greater the polarization, the more likely it is that political identities will demarcate differing conceptions about appropriate behavior toward the state and correlate with social perceptions of legitimacy*.[27] As just explained, these predispositions are important determinants of the success of state-building measures. Contrasting taxpaying cultures, for instance, may develop between state-building in-groups and out-groups, with members of excluded groups refusing to "quasi-voluntarily" grant resources to a state controlled by political enemies.

[26] This draws on Knight (2013), who notices the paradox in classifying as "strong" states that then quickly collapse. Knight makes this point about the Mexican state during the Porfirian dictatorship (1876-1911), a period that many authors consider of successful state-building (e.g. Soifer 2015). The point that revolutions are launched against increasingly invasive (yet detached from society) central states has been prominent in social thinking at least since Tocqueville.

[27] Of course, states can (and do) attempt to mold identities and beliefs in ways that favor voluntary compliance, for example through education and cultural policies. I address this issue empirically in chapter 4.

Empirical studies suggest that evaluations of fairness in the conduct of state authorities are a fundamental predictor of beliefs in legitimacy (Hechter 2013; Tyler 2006). State institutions that act in ways that significant groups or collectivities perceive to be biased against them will fail to earn their trust or cultivate a sense of obligation among those groups' adherents. Political exclusion and a sense of unfair treatment hinder consent. The same happens when state measures are considered to be fundamentally incompatible with deeply held values and beliefs. In order to bolster claims about their right to rule and justify decisions that expand the power of the state over people, governments draw on principles, social conventions, values, and beliefs current in the given society (Braddick 2004, 69). Yet where these justifications are in stark conflict with what parts of the body politic consider normatively acceptable, state incursions are met with hostility and breed resentment, rather than willing obedience.

State-building under sharp cleavages thus produces states that antagonize segments of society and by virtue of their uneven linkages, malfunction, or best, display highly heterogeneous performance. This is, in my theoretical framework, the other force propelling uneven states, apart from state-builders' varying founding investments in governing infrastructure: *during formative periods in polarized polities, attitudes toward an expanding state across the society come to reflect the structure of political antagonism—that is, the political boundaries between state-building coalitions and their rivals*. This second component thus speaks directly to the role of legitimation in state formation.

Just as initial investments in governing infrastructure can set a different institutional base for the state across territory, thereby contributing to persisting differences in state capacity, so this alternative source of unevenness can set off its own mechanisms of historical persistence. As explained above, an important characteristic of deep cleavages is that group members are

socialized into parallel subcultures and may pass down political identities, along with attendant beliefs and norms of behavior, to succeeding generations. Students of party systems have long recognized that the selective exposure of individuals to particular political outlooks, as well as their encapsulation into cleavage-based organizational networks, can produce long-term "continuities of sentiment and identification" (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, 53). The intergenerational transmission of political attitudes has received renewed attention from scholars that trace outcomes to historical causes (e.g. Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen 2016; Nunn and Wantchekon 2011). Levels of trust, cultural norms, and beliefs can persist well after the institutions or conditions that spawned them disappear (Nunn 2012).

Drawing on these works, I argue that hegemonic struggles during state-building periods may produce similar effects on patterns of political identification and mass attitudes toward government institutions. Compliance with state authorities—for example, in taxpaying—is, to an important extent, a form of learned behavior. Hence inherited norms, habits, and beliefs about the state, shaped by political group membership and the group's status during early state-building struggles, matter. Individuals who are socialized within families, associations, and social networks that established an oppositional relationship with state institutions during formative periods will be less likely to trust authorities, feel an obligation to comply, or see the state as a shared instrument to solve common problems. Lingering hostility may continue to shape state-society relations and hence institutional performance even after political polarization subsides. *This cultural continuity in political identification, learned patterns of behavior, and attitudes toward the state is another mechanism linking historical struggles to persistent state capacity outcomes.*

To illustrate, in both of my country cases we observe certain "continuities of sentiment and identification" that durably shaped political groups' behaviors and inclinations to collaborate with state institutions. The hegemonic struggle between anticlerical revolutionaries and political Catholics during the formative years of the Mexican state in the 1920s and 1930s left a deep mark on the latter's group relationship with the state, a mark that would last for at least the rest of the century.[28] As historian Ben Fallaw writes, even as violence and polarization started to wane in the 1940s, and Church and state reached a *modus vivendi*, "Catholics retained a lasting antipathy to key elements of the revolutionary project…Mexico's predominantly Catholic civil society denied the revolutionary ruling party generalized consent" (2013, 12). In his detailed study of grassroots Catholic activism in four different regions of the country, Fallaw finds "widespread popular antipathy and antagonism toward the postrevolutionary state" (224); argues that "the postrevolutionary state at the dawning of the PRI's [Partido Revolucionario Institucional] golden age in 1940 was much feebler, and its social support much shallower" than typically portrayed due to Catholic opposition (223); and concludes that this opposition "continued even after most anticlerical restrictions had ended. Even after [President Lázaro] Cárdenas left office, this remained an uncivil society" (2).

Defeated in the battlefield during the bloody "Cristero" War (1926-1929), Catholics continued to engage in various forms of resistance and to mobilize through lay associations and church-based networks.[29] They supported the formation of various conservative organizations opposed to the Mexican state, or more precisely to the party-state, some of which mimicked, in

[28] Following Alan Knight, throughout the study I use the term "political Catholics" to refer to the segment of the Mexican population "whose politics were premised on their Catholicism" (2010, 234). The distinction is relevant because Catholicism was (and is) by far the dominant religion in Mexico, but levels of religiosity are of course variable, and not all Catholics based their politics on their religion.

[29] Catholic insurgents took up arms to the cry of "*¡Viva Cristo Rey!*" or "Long live Christ the King!" which gives the Cristero War its name.

the dialectical logic typical of deep cleavages, the corporatism and organic militancy of the state's mass organizations (Knight 2007, 26, 37–42).[30] These organizations, along with the institutional Church, helped reproduce identities and hostile attitudes toward the revolutionary state. Ultimately, Catholic networks formed the backbone of the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), founded in 1939. The PAN, as is well-known, became the main opposition party to the regime throughout the twentieth century (Loaeza 1999; Mabry 1973; Smith 2007).

The attitudinal effects of the Cristero War itself, a broad-based mass Catholic insurgency that represents the violent peak of the religious cleavage, remain visible. In a recent qualitative study of the Cristero diaspora in the United States and the sending regions in Mexico, historian Julia Young documents that some ninety years after, stories, symbols, and memories of the war continue to shape beliefs and behaviors among descendants of those who experienced it. Young writes that "devotion to the memories, myths, and martyrs of the Cristero War has endured across both time (through multiple generations of Mexican families) and space (from the Mexican interior to cities and towns across the United States)" (2015, 157).[31]

Also in Colombia we find political socialization effects that lastingly conditioned how Colombians on opposite sides of a cleavage related to different state institutions, depending on which party historically drove investments in the relevant dimension of state power. In this case, Liberals and Conservatives formed, since the nineteenth century, a vertically integrated,

[30] Catholic-based organizations included Mexican Catholic Action (ACM), the National League for the Defense of Religious Liberty (LNDLR), the National Sinarquista Union (UNS), the Union of Mexican Catholic Ladies (UDCM), and the Catholic Association of Mexican Youth (ACJM), among others. For a complete list, see (Fallaw 2013, xi–xiii).

[31] She cites as an example the veneration of Toribio Romo, a Cristero priest and martyr, as the patron saint of migrants from Mexico's center-west, the epicenter of the Cristero insurgency. Romo was canonized in 2000 along with other priests who died during the Church-state conflict.

Schmittian system of "hereditary hatreds" that ran through the society.[32] Political rivals were entirely locked out from the state (and state patronage), persecuted, and put at serious disadvantage when either party held power (González 2014; Stoller 1995). In consequence, whatever state-building measures the governing party adopted, their legitimacy stopped at partisan boundaries.

Pécaut captures the broadly-accepted interpretation of historical Colombian politics when he writes that "to a much greater extent than the state, the two parties [enlisted] the population as a whole in their local networks, both rural and urban, and [constituted] authentic subcultures passed down from generation to generation" (Pécaut 2013, 9; see also Dix 1987; Oquist 1980). Karl notes that partisan loyalties were associated with "ingrained patterns of thought and behavior" that fed into cycles of violence (2017, 49). Even after coalition rule during the National Front (1958-1974) sought to reduce sectarianism, gave both parties equal access to state office at all levels, and blurred any programmatic distinctions, partisan loyalties remained visible and continued to structure behavior at the mass level. As Hartlyn notes, one of the parties tended to remain hegemonic in any given territorial unit, and voting patterns pre- and post-National Front displayed remarkable continuity (1988, 155–56).

In the rest of this dissertation, I continue to put flesh on this general, organizing theoretical framework by examining the effects of these historical cleavages on the building of the Mexican and Colombians states. Before doing so, I briefly discuss relevant conceptualization issues.

[32] I am again referring to Schmitt's friend-enemy distinction (see footnote 7 above). The widely-used description of Liberal-Conservative identities as inherited hatreds is attributed to Miguel Antonio Caro, a doctrinaire Conservative writer-politician who governed from 1894 to 1898 (Karl 2017, 248, fn. 51).

1.3 The State as a Concept and the Dimensions of State Power

Throughout this introductory chapter, I have emphasized the importance of examining state-building processes below the national level. Another core message, which will be exhaustively substantiated in the empirical chapters, has been that we must disaggregate state power into its constituent dimensions and allow for the possibility that states may develop unevenly not only across territory, but across functional domains simultaneously. Once we think about processes of state-building in this way, it becomes clear that different causal forces may possibly drive the development of different aspects of the state; that the same causal forces may in turn have a distinct impact on separate dimensions of state capacity; and that not all state institutions may share a common development chronology.

Yet the fact that states are not monolithic or homogeneous institutions—and that we must carefully analyze how each of their different parts and capacities develop—does not eliminate the value of the concept itself, as the set of interconnected apparatuses that exercise political power within a given territory. Drawing on historian Michael Braddick's careful conceptualization (2004, chap. 1), I here understand the state in the basic sense of a discrete set of agencies with the following characteristics: they are connected to each other according to a legally specified framework; they are each invested with authority over individuals, and this authority is both territorially and functionally bounded; within those bounds, their activity is ultimately backed by the threat of force.[33] The state thus includes the military and police, the fiscal and educational bureaucracies, local administrations, the courts, and so on. It is a coercively-backed *network* of agencies that have delimited functions within a geographical area.

[33] Braddick's definition of the state is the following: "a coordinated and territorially bounded network of agents exercising political power" (2004, 9). Political power, in turn, is understood in the Weberian sense that, unlike other forms of power, it is territorially based and backed by the threat of force. This threat is claimed to be legitimate.

This definition has important advantages. First, it does not determine *a priori* what specific functions belong to the state and which do not. The accumulation of functions in the state apparatus is an important aspect to consider when evaluating its weight over society and its overall power. Unlike the majority of studies of state-building in Latin America (Centeno 2002; Saylor 2014; Soifer 2015), which concentrate on the nineteenth century, mine focuses on state formation in Mexico and Colombia in the twentieth century.[34] A key reason is that a "quantum leap" (Whitehead 1994, 91) in state power occurred between both centuries, in part through the accumulation of greater functions.

States in the region, despite their well-known weaknesses, adopted much more ambitious economic and social roles (for example, in popular education) and penetrated territory and everyday social life to unprecedented levels. Bluntly put, the twentieth century was the century of the "massification" and internal spread of state organizations that previously possessed a limited social and territorial reach. This allows me to provide new insight into processes of state formation in the region. Yet in terms of the definition of the state, we need one that is flexible enough to allow for variation in the functions adopted by states across countries and over the course of history. The definition above accomplishes just that.

The second advantage of the definition above is that the state is not reduced to, nor conflated with, the institutions of central government. A central set of governing institutions with control over coercive means and claiming ultimate authority over a territory must of course exist for it to be possible to speak of a state in the first place. Beyond this point, however, different forms of politically integrating the territory and distributing functions and prerogatives within the state apparatus are possible.

[34] An important exception is Kurtz (2013), who rightly considers the rise of mass politics as a second critical juncture in the formation of Latin American states—the first being the initial consolidation of national institutions, typically in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The general definition allows for different institutional structures (e.g. federal versus unitary arrangements) and varying levels of centralization of functions. This is relevant because many arguments, implicitly drawing on a model of unitary governance and concentrated sovereignty, tend to evaluate state strength by reference only to the capacities of central governments, leaving aside regional and local institutions that also form part of the network of agencies formally exercising political power (see Katznelson 2002).[35] Under this approach, the key point in evaluating the strength of the state is how effectively it performs—through its various apparatuses—the governance functions it accumulates, not how centralized it is.

This discussion also makes clear that state performance and the commonly used concept of "state capacity" are essentially multidimensional. For analytical purposes, it is useful to classify the various activities of states into separate categories. In this study, I follow classic works by Tilly (1975) and Skocpol (1985), as well as more recent contributions by Soifer (2008, 2015) and Ziblatt (2006), to decompose state power into a few key constituent dimensions. Tilly explained that state-building involved, at its core, processes of "extraction, coercion, and control" and the attendant development of institutions to perform those functions (50). Soifer and Ziblatt both draw on this disaggregation to analyze three arenas of state activity: the extraction of revenue, the conscription of armed forces, and the administration of basic services, the latter component capturing "the capacity to actually implement policy or to regulate social life" (Ziblatt 2006, 87).

[35] Katznelson makes this point in his examination of the seemingly weak antebellum American state. The problem lies in assuming that strength is equivalent and directly proportional to a particular structure of the state. Katznelson argues that the American state was remarkably successful in asserting sovereignty, expanding its territory, and mobilizing resources and manpower when needed. Its considerable stateness nevertheless resulted from the aggregation of capabilities which were diffused throughout subnational structures, rather than concentrated in the center.

As I explore in chapters 4 and 5, the latter dimension includes the provision of goods and services that, while cementing state control over society, are also valuable for the population, like education. Here we thus encounter the co-evolution of state capacity and citizenship rights.[36]

We can similarly include in the sphere of control/regulation the "cognitive capacity" (Whitehead 1994, 46–47) of the state, or its ability to collect, process, and classify information in ways that make territory and society "legible," and hence controllable for rulers (Scott 1998).

To this three-way classification of state activity we may add the judicial function, which Tilly recognized to be an important omission in his seminal framework (1975, 6, 49). Indeed, for Skocpol "administrative, legal, extractive, and coercive organizations are the core of any state," which closely matches the three above dimensions but adds the administration of law and justice as a relevant category in and of itself (1985, 7). These four dimensions thus encapsulate the basic work of modern states and guide the organization of the rest of this study. My empirical chapters attend primarily to the capacity to tax, coerce, and carry out policies of social reform, but I touch on the provision of justice at the local level, for the Mexican case, in chapter 3.

1.4 Chapter Outline

The rest of this dissertation is divided into four empirical chapters that analyze the uneven development of the state within Mexico and Colombia, based on the organizing theoretical framework presented above. I start by examining the evolution of fiscal capacities in both countries in chapter 2. The Mexican and Colombian states both expanded their ability to extract revenue in the form of domestic taxes during relevant junctures in the first half of the twentieth century. For the first time in their history, internal taxes became the main financial

[36] Similarly, a state capable of effectively deploying coercive capacity can potentially direct it to repress its citizens and imprison them for rule breaking, but also to protect them from each other.

source to provide services and develop other apparatuses. The chapter nevertheless shows, using original historical data on tax collection for both central and local governments, that sharp cleavages severely affected the development of fiscal institutions throughout territory, with consequences that are felt to this day. In both countries, tax capacities developed unevenly based on which political force pushed through with the expansion of the fiscal state, and which one resisted.

Chapter 3 examines the reorganization of coercive capacity in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution, focusing on the central state's articulation with locally-based militias to exercise control and advance the revolutionary project. Drawing on a new geo-referenced dataset of the location of over 1,700 state-sanctioned militia forces in the 1930s and 1940s and other archival sources, the chapter documents how cleavage-based political contention pushed postrevolutionary governments to delegate control over physical force on these local armed groups, which straddled the boundary between state and society. This strategy had fateful consequences for state capacity in the long run, as it stunted the development of civilian security and justice institutions at the local level. The chapter documents that a higher historical incidence of militias is associated with weaker law enforcement and conflict resolution institutions across Mexican municipalities, as well as higher homicide rates and a higher probability of presence of vigilante organization in the contemporary period.

Chapter 4 also deals with the case of Mexico, but it extends the analysis to non-violent forms of social control. Specifically, it analyzes the development of three crucial institutions through which the postrevolutionary state penetrated society: the *ejido*, or the agrarian reform settlements through which the central state transformed the structure of property and linked to the rural masses; the education system, through which rulers attempted to "defanaticize"

Mexico's Catholic population and cultivate loyalty to the Revolution; and the civil registry, which increased the state's knowledge of its subjects and broke the control of the Church over the registration of basic life events. The chapter shows, using new municipal-level data, that the religious cleavage strongly influenced state-building efforts throughout territory, as governments' made heavier investments in these forms of social penetration in areas of Church strength and Catholic resistance.

Chapter 5 returns to the case of Colombia, this time to analyze the impact of the Liberal-Conservative opposition on patterns of expansion of education and mass literacy throughout the twentieth century. Although both the central and local governments could historically extract greater amounts in taxes in Liberal municipalities, the fiscal state did not develop in harmony with the education state. This last empirical chapter shows that the Conservative Party and the allied Catholic Church used their strong historical control over the education system to privilege Conservative areas in the provision of education. Given literacy restrictions on the right to vote, only lifted in 1936, the uneven spread of literacy skills along partisan lines also unevenly broadened the electorate, and thereby could help the Conservative Party in its pursuit of political hegemony. The chapter documents that the gap in educational attainment between historically Liberal versus Conservative municipalities persisted throughout the century of mass education, and remains visible today. In this arena, then, historical cleavages also cast a long shadow.

After these four empirical chapters, the conclusion reflects on the broader contributions and implications of the study, considers its limitations, and outlines potential avenues for future research.

2 RESISTING TAXATION: HISTORICAL CLEAVAGES AND FISCAL (IN)CAPACITY IN MEXICO AND COLOMBIA

Abstract

This chapter explores the historical origins of within-country variation in fiscal capacity. In contrast to prevailing economic and geographic explanations of the reach of the state, I argue that domestic patterns of state fiscal strength reflect historical lines of political conflict. Fiscal capacity stagnates in areas where state-building coalitions exclude or antagonize interests and values along a politically salient cleavage during formative periods of the national state. I test this general argument using hand-collected, municipal-level historical data from Mexico and Colombia, derived from previously untapped archival sources. The analysis documents a significant negative relationship between Catholic insurgency against the Mexican postrevolutionary state, spawned by a religious cleavage, and governments' subsequent ability to collect tax revenues, deploy tax collectors, and broaden the tax base. The effects span both central and local governments and are observable to this day. I also present evidence that a deep-seated partisan divide mapped onto geographic patterns of tax extraction in Colombia. While fiscal capacity grew considerably under Liberal administrations in a crucial period of institution-building in the first half of the twentieth century, tax revenues stagnated and remain lower in more Conservative municipalities. These factors have robust explanatory power even after accounting for differences in socioeconomic development, geography, and preexisting levels of state capacity. The findings trace the political roots of state fiscal weakness and provide new insight into the process of state formation across a national territory.

2.1 Introduction

How do states gain the ability to tax? In the previous chapter, I argued that domestic political oppositions play a large role in the development of the state and proposed an organizing theoretical framework to relate those cleavages to within-country differences in state performance. This chapter applies core insights from this framework to taxation, which as Tilly wrote, "constitutes the largest intervention of governments in their subjects' private life" (2009, xiii). As I will show, the intensity of such intervention increased substantially in both Mexico and Colombia during relevant state-building junctures in the first half of the twentieth century. However, their respective fiscal states linked unevenly with society and failed to extend their powers uniformly across the territory, contributing to an overall dismal tax performance. Even by the standards of a region inhabited by "fiscal dwarfs" (Centeno 2002, 6), Mexico and Colombia remained poor performers throughout the twentieth century, in part due to the precarious foundations laid during the early incursions of the fiscal state.

At least since Hobbes, who alerted that the "the tenacity of the people" in "the passage of money to the public treasury" was one of the main diseases that endangered Leviathan and weakened "its life and motion," ([1651] 1996, 228–29), scholars have identified taxation as one of the core functions of modern states and relied on the fiscal system to examine the social contract (Levi 1988; Tilly 2007). Following this prominent tradition, the chapter examines the sources of domestic variation in the development of fiscal institutions and tax compliance. I argue that the existing structure of political antagonisms as states sought to fiscally penetrate their societies conditioned who could be taxed and where taxpaying habits failed to take root.

Unlike subsequent chapters that deal with individual countries, here I jointly apply this general argument to both of my country cases. In each case, I test my theoretical expectations

using original historical datasets, which I manually compiled through intensive archival work and consultation of multiple unexplored primary sources. I show that the underlying theoretical logic of the argument maintains explanatory power in what were two otherwise quite distinct country contexts.

By way of introduction, it is at this point worth explaining this relevant aspect of my research design. Mexico and Colombia share the outcome of states that formed highly uneven capacities within the territory they claimed to govern. My core argument traces this important development to the intensity of domestic political conflict in both countries, which imprinted a strong partisan character upon state-building processes and made attitudes toward state institutions highly variant across cleavage lines.

However, Mexico and Colombia followed opposite political trajectories in other important dimensions that, in principle, could be responsible for their respective internal patterns of state development. Mexico retained a federal constitutional design after Liberals emerged victorious from the Liberal-Conservative clashes of the nineteenth century. It went through a social revolution that generated a broad process of popular class incorporation, spearheaded by a dominant-party authoritarian regime that undermined landed elites, gave the state broad socioeconomic responsibilities, and governed uninterruptedly throughout the twentieth century. After high levels of political violence in the first of half of the century, the state consolidated and the country developed one of the most stable authoritarian political systems in the world. The anticlerical Mexican state forcefully confined the Catholic Church to civil society. With respect

to this decisive cleavage, it found expression through a violent insurgency (the Cristero War) after the dominant revolutionaries closed other channels of political participation.[37]

Now consider Colombia. It maintained a unitary constitutional design after Conservatives emerged victorious from the clashes of the nineteenth century. The state retained organic linkages to the Catholic Church well into the twentieth century. The two elitist parties were so entrenched that they remained electorally dominant even as the rise of mass politics destroyed party systems elsewhere. Processes of lower-class incorporation occurred within the existing parties, the state eschewed an ambitious socioeconomic role, and traditional elites preserved control over land. After a few decades of relative peace in the first half of the twentieth century, levels of political violence exploded in the second half as a new partisan conflict (*La Violencia*) and then guerrilla movements kept the country in a permanent state of civil war. Yet the country maintained a democratic public sphere and a competitive electoral system all throughout its history, in which the two traditional parties continually confronted each other. With respect to this overriding cleavage, it found expression in high levels of political violence, but also in the ballot box.

Throughout the rest of the dissertation, I explain how several of these distinctive aspects interacted with processes of state formation in each country. It is clear that state development acquired, in each case, unique characteristics. Yet at a more basic level of analysis, and all these differences notwithstanding, the countries fall under a common theoretical logic. I demonstrate that in both cases it was sharp internal divisions that spawned uneven patterns of state development across territory and spheres of state power. The exhaustive within-country analyses

[37] Confessional parties were banned in the Constitution of 1917, blocking the formation of an openly Catholic-based political party. Although armed religious mobilization led state elites to contemplate the possibility of relaxing existing constraints on party politics (President Plutarco Elías Calles's speech in Congress in September 1, 1928, as the Cristero War ravaged the center-west, is illustrative in this respect), the constitutional ban remained in place.

that form the empirical core of this dissertation are therefore embedded, at the country level, in a different-systems type of comparison that draws on the logic of Mill's method of agreement (Gerring 2007, 139–47). The theoretical framework advanced in chapter 1 may thus be potentially useful in explaining state development in diverse contexts and time periods.

The rest of this chapter is organized as follows. Section 2.2 briefly discusses the importance of analyzing the strength of the state through the lens of taxation. Section 2.3 presents the puzzle of uneven fiscal state-building in postrevolutionary Mexico. It then details how the religious cleavage structured the process of state formation and generated state-society dynamics that affected the development of fiscal institutions and societal norms of compliance during this critical stage. After doing so, the section proceeds to present the data and empirical analysis. Section 2.4 replicates this structure for the Colombian case. Section 2.5 concludes.

2.2 Taxation and State Capacity

There is perhaps no better manifestation of stateness than the ability to extract revenue from society. As Levi writes, "the history of state revenue production is the history of the evolution of the state" (1988, 1). In some definitions, the very boundaries of the state are determined by the power to tax constituents (North 1981).[38] There are at least three reasons that make taxation a privileged window into state power.

First, states face considerable administrative, logistical, and cognitive challenges in raising compulsory payments from their populations. To overcome them, they must build a far-reaching institutional apparatus (Weber's "material implements" of rule and administrative staff); address the principal-agent problems inherent to any organization, particularly in tax

[38] North defines the state as "an organization with a comparative advantage in violence, extending over a geographic area *whose boundaries are determined by its power to tax constituents*" (1981, 21). Emphasis added.

collection; and develop technical and administrative capabilities to register, measure, and ultimately render society "legible," which lie at the core of modern infrastructural forms of political rule (Mann 2012; Scott 1998).[39] In this first sense, fiscal indicators provide us with information about the level of bureaucratic development of the state organization.

Second, although the capacity to coerce ultimately underpins the state's fiscal demands, resource extraction rests heavily on "quasi-voluntary" compliance on the part of citizens (Levi 1988). Effective tax collection demands more than technical ability, administrative capacity, or credible punishment threats (Lieberman 2003). Even the most qualified tax bureaucracy would struggle to mobilize revenue in a context of broad societal opposition. Systemic tax evasion, after all, is fundamentally political. Taxation links subjects and states in relations of mutual obligation and is, simultaneously, the main channel through which citizens in modern societies make sacrifices for other members of the national community, via contributions to their common political authorities (Martin, Mehrotra, and Prasad 2009, 3). The level and origin of fiscal revenues thus speaks to the depth of state roots in society, the strength of social bonds, and the ability of rulers to cultivate at least a thin form of legitimacy. Put differently, the amount and type of taxes that a state can impose on its population are a good index of its ability to generate consent.

Third, fiscal capacity underlies every other dimension of state power. Although the intra-country incidence of state capacity in different domains of governance does not co-vary as strongly as often assumed, as I demonstrate in this dissertation, the capacity to extract directly conditions the state's overall ability to undertake other governance tasks. In this sense, fiscal capacity is a precondition of effective state power across functional realms, including the

[39] As Mann notes, it is no coincidence that the term "statistics" itself emerged at the end of the 18th century with the expansion of infrastructural capacities, as meaning "data pertaining to the state" (2012, 361).

maintenance of civil order and the provision of other growth-promoting public goods (Besley and Persson 2011; Hoffman 2015).

2.3 Catholic Insurgency and Uneven State Formation in Postrevolutionary Mexico

2.3.1 The Uneven Fiscal State in Mexico

The Mexican Revolution ushered in a marked period of state- and nation-making that took the size, scope, and capacities of the central state to unprecedented levels in Mexican history. A broad scholarly consensus exists that the two decades between 1920 and 1940 represent the formative period of the modern Mexican state (Aguilar Camín and Meyer 1993). By the end of Lázaro Cárdenas's presidency in 1940, major armed challenges to the postrevolutionary regime had ceased, central institutions had expanded and stabilized, and the party-state had incorporated lower- and middle-class sectors into the corporatist structures that characterized Mexico's durable authoritarian regime (Garrido 1982).

In the fiscal arena, postrevolutionary state-building involved a substantial expansion of the fiscal bureaucracy, the adoption of new direct taxes—most prominently the income tax in 1924, and a contentious process of tax centralization, through which central state elites sought to end "fiscal anarchy," subordinate autonomous regional strongmen, and create an integrated national market (Díaz Cayeros 2006). In 1910, on the verge of the Revolution, the federal government collected approximately 67% of total public revenues, with the remainder distributed between the states, the municipalities, and the Federal District. By the late 1940s, the figure was up to 83%, and hence regional and local political elites were almost completely dependent on central transfers (Aboites 2003, 39). The centralization of fiscal powers was a key feature of the political economy of the postrevolutionary authoritarian regime.

Other fiscal indicators also clearly reflect the increase in central state capacity occurring in the decades following the armed Revolution. Data collected during archival research indicate that tax personnel in domestic tax collection offices, for instance, more than doubled between the late 1920s and the late 30s.[40] Actual revenues also grew, both in absolute terms and relative to the size of the national economy. The overall tax take of the national government averaged 3.3% of gross domestic product (GDP) during the last five years of the Porfirian dictatorship (1876-1911). By the early 1940s, it had reached 6% of GDP. Given the considerable growth of the economy over the period, this represented a significant increase in the resources at the disposal of the national government.

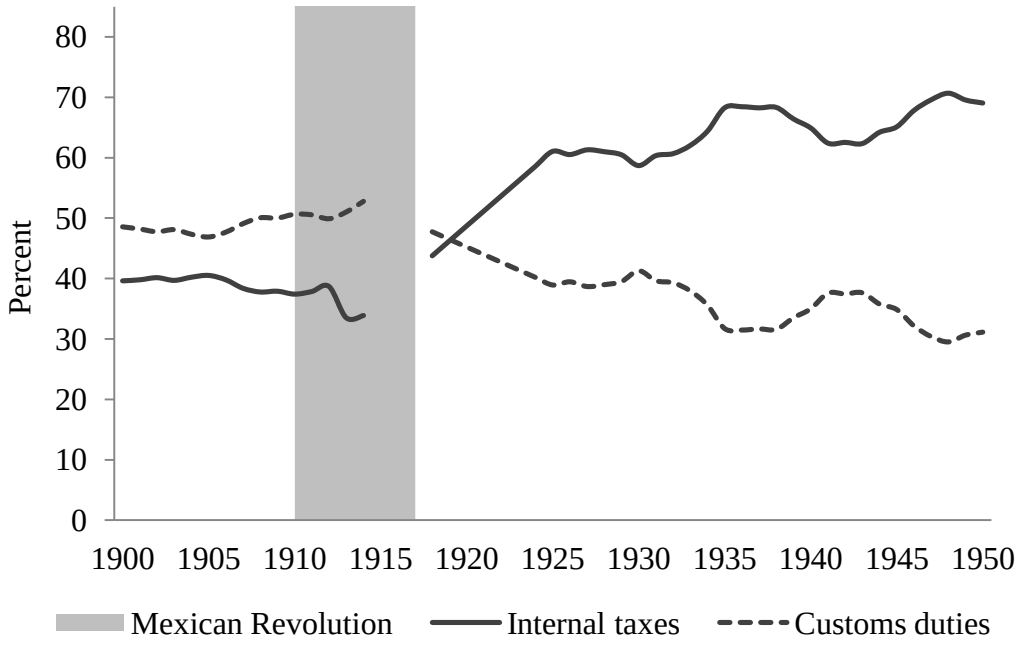
Perhaps more importantly, postrevolutionary governments oversaw a decisive shift in the composition of taxation. Along with revenue levels, the structure of tax revenue is highly revealing of the capacity of the state to exert effective authority over territory and people (Lieberman 2002; Soifer 2015). Customs duties require a minimal degree of state capacity, as they can be collected simply by controlling ports and border cities. They also make governments highly vulnerable to fluctuations in world markets. By comparison, domestic indirect taxes demand greater territorial presence and administrative capacity, and as such signal a more developed tax state. Indirect levies are nevertheless easier to collect than direct taxes on income and wealth, which are the most visible, require far greater knowledge of society and legitimacy, and fall disproportionately on powerful economic interests.

[40] Data on tax personnel, offices, and their collected revenues come from research conducted in the Archivo General de la Nación (AGN) and the Archivo Histórico de la Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público (SHCP), located in the National Palace. Specific printed sources located in the SHCP's archive are listed in the Bibliography under Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público (1927, 1939b, 1939a, 1940a, 1940b, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944a, 1944b, 1945a, 1945b, 1946, 1955, 1932). In the AGN's presidential archives, the main data sources are: Obregón-Calles, 121-H-H-37; Abelardo Rodríguez, caja 226, exp. 650/3; Lázaro Cárdenas, caja 1062, exp. 566.1.

In the Mexican case, customs duties were the main source of state revenue for the entire nineteenth century and up to the Revolution, a reflection of the state's shallow roots throughout territory.[41] Again by the early 1940s, however, the pattern had shifted. Internal taxes were now close to 70% of total tax revenues, and newly adopted direct taxes represented a higher proportion of the state's fiscal income than ever before. Figure 2.1 below summarizes this decisive change. The figure shows the origin of fiscal revenue for the federal government in the first half of the twentieth century, distinguishing between customs duties and taxes raised internally. As is clear from the graph, internal taxes grew as the main source of revenue during postrevolutionary state-building, putting governments on a more secure fiscal footing. This is a clear indication of the increasing ability of the state to intervene in society.

[41] The capacity to collect domestic indirect taxes improved in the last decades of the nineteenth century and throughout the Porfiriato (Carmagnani 1989; Soifer 2015), without replacing customs duties as the main source of revenue. By 1910, internal indirect taxes represented some 30% of total national tax revenues; direct taxes came close to 8%. All figures in this section are author calculations based on INEGI (2015) and *Estadísticas Económicas del Porfiriato* (1965).

Figure 2.1. Sources of national tax revenue in Mexico, 1900-1950 (five-year moving averages)



Source: Own calculations based on INEGI (2015) and Estadísticas económicas del porfiriato (1965). Internal taxes include all direct and indirect taxes collected by the federal government. Five-year moving averages are shown to remove year-specific fluctuations.

Yet crucial for this study, the substantial national-level expansion of state infrastructural power in the aftermath of the Revolution conceals great heterogeneity in the ability of the state to extract revenue across the territory. The most comprehensive study of the fiscal system suggests that the central government issued a blanket "fiscal pardon" to the provinces, drawing the vast majority of its fiscal income from Mexico City (Aboites 2003, 53–54). However, issues of data availability prevented the author from reaching more detailed conclusions about the territorial distribution of taxation.[42]

[42] Aboites presents evidence that central elites considered the geographic origin of federal tax collection an important issue, but the lack of available data leads him to speculate that the information remained confidential (2003, 395). The data I uncovered in the archive of the Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público thus constitute an important contribution to the specialized literature.

My data, drawn from previously untapped archival sources, allow for a deeper understanding of the regional variance in the central state's fiscal strength. To my knowledge, this is the first study to present systematic subnational data on the federal government's tax revenues for this crucial historical period. Based on estimations of state-level GDP by economic historians (Esquivel 1999; Germán-Soto 2005), I calculated the amount of taxes extracted by the national government in each Mexican state in the 1940s, relative to the size of the regional economy.[43] Federal domestic taxes were collected by centrally-controlled tax offices throughout the country, whose number oscillated between 62 in 1925 and 98 in 1945.

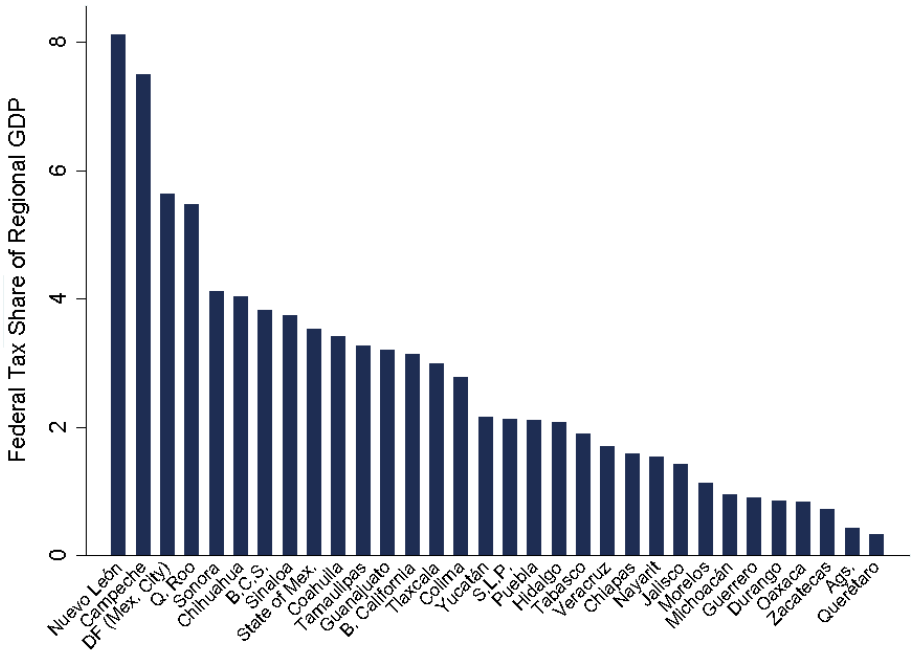
The territorial jurisdiction of several tax offices crossed state boundaries, and therefore state-level figures are estimated with some error. The empirical analysis in the next section is performed at a more disaggregated level (the federal tax office) to avoid this problem. As an approximation, state-level estimates are nevertheless informative of the considerable unevenness in the central state's fiscal capabilities across territory. Figure 2.2 below shows subnational variation in *federal* tax revenues across states in Mexico, relative to each state's GDP. To smooth out the data, the graph presents average revenues for five years (1938-1942), as a share of regional GDP in 1940.

As the graph shows, by the late 1930s and early 1940s the federal government collected less than 1% of regional GDP in national taxes in seven out of 32 states (counting federal territories and Mexico City as states), and less than 2% in thirteen. In contrast, extraction was above 4% of regional GDP in northern states like Sonora and Chihuahua, and it surpassed 8% in the industrialized state of Nuevo León. It took some thirty additional years for the aggregate national figure to reach that level. Even today, some eighty years later, the national state has not

[43] Taxes levied by states and municipalities are not included. The federal government collected more than 70% of total public revenues in this period (Aboites 2003, 39). That said, I also analyze local government revenues below.

been able to expand its tax force much beyond that point (relative to the size of the economy). From 2005 to 2015, the federal government's tax revenues in Mexico averaged 9.5% of GDP.[44]

Figure 2.2. Federal tax revenues as share of regional GDP across Mexican states, 1938-1942 averages



Source: Federal tax revenues at the state level come from archival sources (see footnote 40). GDP estimates are from Esquivel (1999) and Germán-Soto (2005)

In significant parts of the country, then, the postrevolutionary state exercised little fiscal authority. The negligible tax contributions of several regions betray the state's inability to forge uniform links to society and develop consistent administrative and cognitive capacities. Although the state clearly became stronger and more centralized in the decades following the Revolution, its ability to raise tax revenue was highly irregular throughout territory, and therefore mediocre even by Latin American standards (Knight 2013, 129–30). In contrast to other durable,

[44] The figure excludes oil revenues and pensions, to make it comparable with the historical figures that do not include these kinds of revenues either. Income taxes, consumption taxes, and other taxes levied by the federal government are all included. Source: Servicio de Administración Tributaria (2015) and INEGI, Cuentas Nacionales, series "Producto Interno Bruto, base 2008" and "Ingresos del Sector Público."

authoritarian "party-state complexes," the Mexican regime did not rest on an "effectively extractive" state (Slater 2010, 51). In the mid-1960s, before the major oil boom, Mexico ranked at the bottom of the Latin American distribution in terms of total taxation as a percentage of GDP (Hansen 1971, 84). Today, the Mexican state's fiscal powers remain among the weakest in the region. The inability of postrevolutionary governments to coherently develop fiscal institutions during the formative period of the state contributed to putting Mexico in this path.

The uneven development of fiscal capacity in this crucial historical period of institutional reconstruction hamstrung the effectiveness of the postrevolutionary state in other realms, and it locked in a vicious circle of low fiscal income and poor public goods provision that persists to this day (Flores-Macías and Sánchez-Talanquer 2016). It also contributed to the consolidation of regionally divergent patterns of authority, with the postrevolutionary state outsourcing even core policing functions to unpaid semi-formal actors (see chapter 3) and periodically intervening "despotically" in areas where it lacked infrastructural power, so as to maintain order (Mann 2012).[45]

2.3.2 The religious cleavage and the politics of postrevolutionary state-building

What explains such uneven development of fiscal authority in the aftermath of revolutionary civil war? Responding to Mann's call to take seriously who builds the state, for whom, and how (2012, 359), I argue that the structure of conflict between insiders and outsiders to the political coalition that reconstructed the state is a key explanatory factor. Institutional reconstruction took place in a highly fragmented social and cultural landscape, without external threats or other unifying factors inducing internal cohesion or generating broad societal

[45] See for example Rath (2013) for a recent revisionist account that demonstrates the continuous reliance on military deployment to control the countryside, especially in parts of the center-south.

agreement around state-building measures. The Revolution, of course, promoted a specific politics, in fact a deeply contentious project. Mexican society quickly re-polarized into rival revolutionary-versus counterrevolutionary camps, each of which carried broad popular support. Issues of religion were foremost in the reorganization of political oppositions. Anchoring one side of a sharp cleavage, the anticlerical state—like its French counterpart had done—set out to uproot Catholicism in a predominantly Catholic country, remake citizens, and subordinate a powerful Catholic Church.

The receptiveness to the new state would thus markedly across territory, depending on the sociocultural characteristics of communities and the distribution of political attachments. Factors like the relative strength of the Catholic Church across territory and the degree of popular religiosity, which were largely out of the control of state-builders in the early period of state formation, greatly shaped their ability to link with society and legitimize state rule. This uneven record at generating societal compliance during the state's formative period set off different trajectories of institutional development.

The politics of the Mexican postrevolutionary state were determined by the outcome of civil war. After winning the Revolution, a coalition dominated by warring elites from northern Mexico set out to reestablish political order and transform society through a more powerful state. In a pattern reminiscent of the Italian experience of national unification (Tarrow 1996; Ziblatt 2006), the victorious Northerners conquered regions that had either supported rival revolutionary factions or remained quiescent. In many central and southern areas, they were perceived as an occupying force, "as foreign as American troops" (Womack 1969, 258). However, the coalition in control of the emerging state was "keen to incorporate the benighted, provincial south"

(Knight 1986, 236–37) into the revolutionary project, whose core components were state anticlericalism, agrarian redistribution, and federal schooling.[46]

As I argued in chapter 1, it is crucial to understand the cleavages that structured domestic politics during state-building, and this requires attention to the political interests, views, and motivations that dominated the state-building coalition. Though often portrayed as a "petty bourgeoisie" in socioeconomic interpretations of the Revolution (Córdova 1978), more than purely material class interests divided northern state-builders and their social bases from other segments of society. To be sure, many of their political preferences reflected their rising middle-class status, which pitted them against the old, landed Porfirian oligarchy and pushed them into pragmatic alliances with mobilized peasants and workers to establish political control. However, their stance is best understood as resulting from "a bundle of cultural attributes" which, though linked to class, "relate to education, religion, place of origin, and location within the revolutionary process" (Knight 1986, 230).

Indeed, northern revolutionaries, influenced by American capitalism and Protestant ideas, shared a more urban, entrepreneurial, developmentalist, and secular—when not outright anticlerical—political outlook than was typical in other regions of Mexico, where the force of tradition was stronger and the Catholic Church had exerted greater influence since colonial times (Aguilar Camín 1999; Blancarte 1992; Butler 2007). The middle-class status, national aspirations, and inclination for bureaucratic rule of northern revolutionary elites, for example, contrasted with the lower-class and more parochial character of southern agrarian movements.

Yet the deepest political opposition of the postrevolutionary period was with what new state elites saw as a backward traditional culture dominated by Catholic "fanaticism." Key

[46] I join Fallaw and others in considering these three as the distinctive components of the postrevolutionary state's project, as opposed to governance objectives pursued by states in general (Fallaw 2013, 4).

figures in the state-building coalition blamed social and economic backwardness on habits, views, and attachments intrinsically linked to Catholic belief (Bantjes 1998; Becker 1995). In this interpretation, with ideological roots in the Enlightenment and the battles of nineteenth-century Liberals, the Church's pervasive influence was responsible for maintaining the masses in a state of ignorance, fostering their subordination to oppressive landlords, and instilling a poor work ethic that stood in the way of modernization and development.[47] Military victory during the Revolution only reinforced the sense of cultural superiority among new state elites.

Their antipathy toward Catholicism and the Church further deepened over the course of the Revolution and its aftermath, as the Church had sided with the old regime and, not unfoundedly, was seen as trying to undermine the new state (Knight 2007). Through this combination of factors, anticlericalism became a staple feature of postrevolutionay state-building. What followed was a highly polarizing, dialectical struggle between church and state for institutional supremacy and social control, fought during the 1920s and 1930s both in the battlefield and through non-violent forms of contestation.

State-builders' anticlerical, modernizing ideology led to the adoption of stringent restrictions on religious practice, as well as outright persecution and harassment of priests and Catholic militants. As I explore in more detail in chapter 4, their worldview also shaped state activity in a range of policy domains, notably education and agrarian reform. Federal teachers were deployed as a revolutionary vanguard, in charge of transforming the countryside,

[47] The postrevolutionary regime sought to insert itself in a long lineage of patriotic, popular Liberalism (historically articulated against the clerical-conservative camp) and explicitly claimed the legacy of nineteenth-century Liberals, who had separated church and state after their victory over Conservatives in the War of the Reform (1857-1860) and the Second Franco-Mexican War (1861-1867). Tensions between church and state thus ran deep in Mexican history, but the conflict acquired new levels of polarization and intensity in the postrevolutionary period for various reasons. First, many revolutionary anticlericals, in contrast to classic Liberals, did not simply want to confine religion to the private sphere, but to eradicate Catholic belief; second, both church and state now engaged in mass politics; third, the revolutionary state penetrated territory and engaged with civil society more deeply than its predecessors. Its anticlericalism was thus much more disruptive of local life, and it represented a more serious challenge to the Church's social control. See Knight (2010); and the essays in Butler (2007).

"extirpating fanaticism," and replacing priests as the regulators of local life.[48] Like in other revolutions, the new regime thus aspired to ignite a thorough cultural transformation of society and remake its subjects, replacing religion with new civic rituals, recasting identities, and transferring citizen loyalty and obedience from the Church to the state (Bantjes 1997).

In several parts of the territory, these efforts at social engineering clashed with entrenched values and were deeply disruptive of everyday life, thereby sowing distrust and precipitating strong defensive reactions (Fallaw 2013). For many Mexicans whose political preferences and lifestyles were premised on their Catholicism, noncompliance with a radically anticlerical state became close to a moral obligation. At the organizational level, anti-regime contention along the religious cleavage led to cycles of mobilization and counter-mobilization, becoming an importance force behind the unification of revolutionary elites into an official party in the late 1920s, the ancestor to the modern PRI (Knight 1992).[49] Violence from Catholic militants against leading political figures (including the assassination of famous revolutionary general Álvaro Obregón in 1928, after having been reelected for a second presidential term) further reinforced the sense of threat among state-builders and their antagonism with the Church.

It was this cleavage, then, anchored in matters of religion and Church influence, that principally structured political life and loyalties during the formative decades of the postrevolutionary state. As historian Alan Knight writes, "as anticlericalism gathered strength, culminating in the Calles presidency (1924-8)...so the Catholic versus anticlerical, Cristero versus Callista, 'reactionary' versus revolutionary dichotomy came to dominate Mexican

[48] The phrase belongs to Emilio Portes Gil (1935, 5), president of Mexico from 1928 to 1930. See chapter 4 in this dissertation.

[49] I further discuss the role of religious counter-revolutionary mobilization as a spur for party-building in chapter 4, section 4.3. As I explain there, this interpretation of the rise of the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR), although taken into account by some authors, is different from what the conventional wisdom suggests—namely, that the party emerged as an institutional solution to problems of elite circulation and factional dispute within the revolutionary camp. I argue that Catholic mobilization was critical for revolutionaries to coalesce.

politics...Mexican politics acquired a distinctly Manichaean dimension" (2010, 241–42). Throughout this dissertation, I demonstrate the pervasive effects of this struggle on state development across territory.

The Cristero War

The most prominent manifestation of the religious cleavage structuring postrevolutionary state formation came with the Catholic "Cristero" War (1926-1929), the last full-fledged civil war fought in Mexican territory and the single most important challenge to the new state's rule.[50] Under Calles—architect of the Mexican party-state—and his handpicked successors, the central government and its regional allies imposed a series of Jacobin anticlerical measures that included restrictions on the number of priests, prohibitions on Catholic education, the registration of Church property, and direct state supervision over religious affairs (Bailey 1974; Butler 2004; J. Meyer 1994). The Church reacted by suspending religious service, prompting lay Catholics to rebellion. The conflict escalated into a three-year war that caused between 70,000 and 85,000 battle deaths. Of these, some 60% were on the side of the federal army, despite its material superiority (J. Meyer 1995, 260–66).

The war involved massive displacement, aerial bombing of entire communities, and both major battles and irregular warfare. The federal army exploited deep-seated factional divisions between neighboring towns and relied upon local paramilitary groups to combat the Cristeros (see chapter 3), promising land in return. The epicenter of the insurgency was the pious and agriculturally productive Bajío region in the center-west, but armed conflict spread to other areas in north-central and southern Mexico. At its peak, around 50,000 Cristeros were up in arms

[50] To recall, the War owes its name to rebels' battle cry of "Long live Christ the King!"

fighting the federal government, about half in large organized regiments and the rest in scattered rebel bands of various sizes (J. Meyer 1976, 49). The Cristero forces were deeply embedded in local society, forming "a federation of republics, of communities in arms" (J. Meyer 1995, 7). Broad popular support allowed rebels to successfully sustain guerrilla warfare, and they developed sophisticated governance institutions in areas of the center and center-west that fell out of state control.

Religious violence provided an umbrella for other counterrevolutionary interests affected by state policy, especially by political centralization and agrarian reform. Most clearly in pockets of the south-west, conservative coalitions of landlords and displaced local political elites emerged to support the Church and lay believers, not necessarily out of pure religious conviction. Local vendettas and the peripheral violence typical of civil wars also played a role (Kalyvas 2006; Purnell 1999). Even in these cases, however, grievances were codified in religious terms, an indication of the overriding salience of the religious divide and its mobilizing capacity.

Moreover, despite some class-based arguments that attribute the Cristero rebellion to landlord manipulation of the peasantry (an interpretation promoted by the authoritarian regime itself), there is a broad scholarly consensus that it was a genuinely grassroots, cross-class movement, fought by peasants in defense of local cultures that were deeply rooted in Catholic tradition (Bailey 1974; Butler 2004; Knight 1994b; J. Meyer 1994). Harsh repression by federal troops during the Cristero War reinforced hostility against the state among political Catholics, and recent qualitative studies indicate that vivid memories of the conflict have been passed down across generations in the families of those who experienced it (Young 2015; see footnote 31 in chapter 1).

The Cristero rebellion ended not by military defeat, but after a set of agreements between the state and the Church hierarchy that were opposed by grassroots Cristeros. Predictably, unrest and suspicion of the state did not disappear. In the 1930s, the implementation of "socialist" education during Cárdenas's administration (1934-1940) reignited tensions, producing a second yet weaker and more fragmented wave of Catholic uprisings. Even as violent opposition subsided, however, Catholics continued to resent the state and engage in various forms of contention. These efforts were coordinated through church-based networks and more formal mass civil society organizations, which the Church had promoted in a type of "Catholic counter-corporatism" that ultimately pushed the postrevolutionary state to moderate its Jacobinism (Fallaw 2013, 146).[51] After the failure of violence, the Church promoted what Fallaw calls a "radial strategy" of decentralized resistance (6), focused on undermining the regime's legitimacy over the long run.

As discussed in the introductory chapter, areas of Catholic mobilization during the state's formative period would also become strongholds of right-wing partisan opponents to the official party, most notably, but not exclusively, the National Action Party (PAN). The formation and survival of the PAN and other conservative social and political organizations under the inauspicious conditions created by the authoritarian regime is a testament to the deep roots of Catholic opposition the postrevolutionary party-state (Loaeza 1999). As this makes clear, the religious cleavage continued to shape attitudes and behaviors toward the new state, and I argue that it stunted the development of norms and habits of tax compliance during this crucial historical period when, given the unprecedented efforts to build an internal tax base, the Mexican population's relationship with the fiscal state was taking form.

[51] Students of contentious politics have long noted the potential for Church structures, religious networks, and their associated ideologies to support social movements. As Tarrow writes, "with its sprawling structures and official dogma, the Catholic Church has long provided a home for...movements" (2011, 136).

In this way, the new Mexican state failed to elicit consent among a sizable bloc of Mexican society just as it was developing its core institutions, including fiscal ones. As I show below, this had lasting consequences for its ability to collect taxes across territory. Because the Cristero War was the most visible and systematic manifestation of Catholic opposition to state-building, the analysis relies on a new dataset of the conflict to measure the religious cleavage.

2.3.3 Data

Federal fiscal capacity

The main type of data in the empirical analysis below are measures of fiscal capacity. Based on previously untapped historical documents, which I located in the archive of the Ministry of Finance, I assembled a territorially-disaggregated dataset on federal tax revenues and the distribution of the national fiscal bureaucracy for the postrevolutionary period.[52] These documents have not been properly classified or described in archival catalogues. As explained above, neither had they been located or analyzed by historians or other students of Mexico's authoritarian regime (see footnote 42). However, they contain valuable information about the construction and functioning of the fiscal apparatus in the crucial decades that followed the Mexican Revolution. My dataset is therefore an important contribution in and of itself, and it permits original empirical analysis of a key dimension of state-building.

The fiscal data for the federal government are the most important given my argument, which centrally concerns the formation of national state structures, and because the federal government collected the vast majority of taxes (Aboites 2003). In the models below, I rely on measures of federal fiscal capacity for 1940, about a decade after the end of the Cristero

[52] See footnote 40 above for detailed sources.

War.[53]As mentioned above, historians typically consider the 1920s and 1930s as the critical decades of state formation. From then on, institutional continuity and political stability under the dominant party authoritarian regime were the norm.

The unit of analysis in empirical tests of the national state's fiscal strength throughout its territory is the tax office. Domestic federal taxes—including direct and indirect levies—were collected by tax offices located across the country. In 1940, there were a total of 59 offices in all of Mexico's 32 states (including Mexico City with four offices). Each office was in charge of a given geographic area that sometimes crossed state boundaries and that typically spanned several municipalities. Tax offices are thus an intermediate level of analysis, above the municipality but below the state. The tax office is the lowest level at which tax collection figures were recorded by national fiscal authorities.

Because I collected other variables at the municipality level, to perform the analysis I first assigned each municipality to its corresponding federal tax office, using maps and other relevant information from official historical records (Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público 1939b). I then calculated relevant quantities of each variable at the tax office level. For example, the main explanatory variable in models of federal fiscal capacity is calculated as the *share* of municipalities within the area covered by each tax office that experienced insurgency during the Cristero War.

Although the sample size is relatively small, then, it should be noticed that this is the lowest possible level of disaggregation and that all other variables in the models contain detailed information about the municipalities *within* each tax office. For each unit, I calculated two main fiscal indicators: *per capita* domestic tax revenues and the number of tax personnel per 10,000

[53] I collected data through 1945. As I explain, I choose 1940 because for this year detailed information about the territorial jurisdiction of each tax office is available. However, the inter-temporal correlations (post-1940) are strong when data are aggregated at the state level, which suggests observed patterns tended to persist.

citizens, both for 1940. Per capita revenues are the best measure of the national state's actual fiscal performance. The variable includes only taxes raised internally. Customs revenues were collected by a different set of offices in border cities and are not included in the analysis. The second indicator provides information on state elites' intentions or level of extractive effort throughout the country. Descriptive statistics for all variables used in the analysis of the Mexican case can be found in Table 2.4 in the Appendix.

Local fiscal capacity

In addition to testing the association between religious armed resistance and the national state's fiscal capacity, I perform two additional empirical exercises. To investigate if Cristero insurgency is also associated with the extractive capacity of *local* governments, I estimate models with municipal fiscal performance as the dependent variable. Based on documents obtained during archival research in Mexico's National Archive (AGN), I hand-coded, for each municipality, the local government's revenue from different sources in 1945, including property tax revenues, indirect taxes, fees, transfers, and other types of revenue.[54] To my knowledge, this is also the first comprehensive source of data on local government finances at the municipality level for this important historical period. I use these data to calculate two indicators: total per capita municipal government revenue, net of federal and state transfers; and per capita property tax revenue. A map displaying the variation in the first indicator appears as Figure 2.7 in the Appendix at the end of the chapter.

[54] The archival materials from which I obtained local revenues report data for municipalities in which total local government revenue exceeded MX $2,000 in 1945. This leaves out very small municipalities, mostly from the southern state of Oaxaca, whose revenues from all sources (including transfers) were below that figure. For reference, average municipal revenue in 1945 was MX $75,470. The data were obtained from the following archival records: AGN, Ávila Camacho, 522.1/1 ; AGN, Alemán Valdés, 522.1/1. The bad condition of the relevant archival materials made hand-coding the only possible way of recovering the data.

Long-term fiscal capacity

Finally, I investigate whether Catholic resistance to the postrevolutionary state is systematically correlated with national government fiscal performance in the contemporary period. Like with the historical data, this part of the analysis is conducted at the federal tax office level, which is the lowest layer at which fiscal data are compiled.[55] I obtained data from the Mexican tax administration agency (*Servicio de Administración Tributaria*, SAT) to calculate two indicators of the national state's capacity to fiscally penetrate society.[56]

The first is per capita income tax revenues, which is introduced into the models as a five-year average starting in 2000. I use this year because it marks the end of the authoritarian regime born from the Revolution, with the defeat of the PRI in the presidential election to the right-wing PAN. The second measure is the number of people registered as individual taxpayers ("personas físicas"), as a share of the total population living within the area covered by a given tax office. This indicator is also calculated as a five-year average starting in 2008, which is the first available data point. It represents a good measure of the "cognitive" capabilities of the state in the basic function of registering citizens to collect taxes from them.

Independent variable

Given that the religious cleavage manifested itself through violent insurgency between 1926 and 1929, I capture the spatial distribution of this underlying divide using a new dataset on

[55] Tax collection offices in Mexico City (Centro DF, Norte DF, Oriente DF, Sur DF) are excluded from the analysis (see footnote 59 below). Three tax offices have territorial jurisdiction over the area covered by the municipality of Guadalajara, the country's second largest city (Guadalajara, Guadalajara Sur, and Zapopan). This makes it impossible to assign the municipality of Guadalajara to a single tax office, which is a necessary step to calculate the relevant quantities for the independent variables. To avoid losing data or arbitrarily assigning the Guadalajara municipality to one of the three offices (which would induce large measurement error), I merged the three offices and their corresponding municipalities into a single observation. I followed the same procedure for the two federal tax collection offices in the state of Puebla (Puebla Norte and Puebla Sur), given that they both have jurisdiction over the state capital.

[56] The data were obtained through freedom of information requests.

the incidence of rebellious activity in this period. The main measure is a dummy variable that takes the value of one if violent events related to the conflict took place in the municipality, local residents took up arms against the government, or if they actively provided support to the rebels. Municipalities where no violent events occurred, citizens did not participate in the insurgency, or rebels did not assert control, received the value of zero.

The data were hand-coded for each municipality using multiple secondary sources, starting with Meyer's classic work (1994, 1995) and complementing it with over a dozen regional and local studies that provide information not originally covered by Meyer. A complete list of consulted sources appears in the Bibliography at the end of the study. Overall, insurgent activity could be traced in approximately a quarter of all municipalities existing at the time.

While quantifying a complex historical process with a dummy variable has obvious limitations, this approach nevertheless allows me to conduct systematic comparative analysis for units with and without insurgency and comprehensively test the connection with the development of fiscal capacity. The dataset is the most disaggregated and precisely identified source on the geographic distribution of the Cristero War to date. A map depicting the geographic distribution of insurgency at the municipality level appears below as Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3. Geography of the Cristero War (1926-1929)

Note: For clarity, municipal boundaries are not shown. Dark areas depict municipalities that experienced insurgency. Municipalities that did not exist at the time of the Cristero War appear in white.

Other variables

In addition to these explanatory and dependent variables, I include other measures to control for possible confounders, that is, factors that could jointly determine fiscal capacity and the incidence of violence. The first is the level of socioeconomic development. As explained in the introductory chapter, economic development is itself a function of state capacity (Johnson and Koyama 2017). I nevertheless include it as a control in several specifications in order to isolate the direct effect of the religious cleavage on the ability to accumulate further tax capacity, and to show that negative associations between insurgency and fiscal extraction are not simply due to differences in economic wealth between regions. Notice, however, that any negative association between religious insurgency and development would make it *harder* to find a significant independent effect of insurgency. If the Cristero War variable remains significant after accounting for economic differences between regions, it will be a clear indication that levels of tax extraction were not simply a function of economic activity.

To account for differences in economic wealth across units, I use the share of the population in the industrial and commercial sectors of the economy. I obtained data for each municipality from the 1940 census and then calculated the respective population share for each tax office. This measure is strongly correlated with available GDP estimates at the state level ($\rho = 0.8$, $p<0.001$), which confirms it is a very good proxy for development.[57]

I also consider the potential impact of population density and rough terrain, which as explained above, have been argued to influence both state outcomes and the probability of insurgency. Population density was calculated using the 1930 census and data on the surface area of municipalities, obtained from INEGI. To precisely assess the impact of geography, I collected

[57] There are no historical GDP data for municipalities.

data on the altitude of the city or town serving as the seat of government in each municipality, and then calculated the standard deviation for municipalities within each tax office. This indicator captures the difficulty posed by the terrain in a given area better than alternative measures, like average or maximum elevation, and also other relevant characteristics of the land like suitability for agriculture. In regressions run at the municipal level, the measure of terrain roughness is the standard deviation of the altitude of all population settlements existing within the municipality in 2010.

An important concern in estimating the relationship between armed resistance to postrevolutionary state efforts and fiscal power is that both variables might be determined by preexisting levels of state capacity, emerging from the historical development of the state up to the twentieth century. Several important works on Latin American state-building focus on the nineteenth century to explain long-term patterns of state strength (e.g. Soifer 2015). Following this logic, internal patterns of state capacity might have also been definitively established in this historical period. It is thus reasonable to worry that both the geography of insurgency and fiscal performance stem from this underlying, longstanding variation.

To address this concern about potential reverse causation, I obtained data on the number of government officials under the Porfirian dictatorship in each municipality, using the 1900 census. As a measure of preexisting state capacity, I calculated the density of bureaucrats per 1,000 people in the area covered by tax collection offices. This is a good indicator of the historical presence of the prerevolutionary state, and therefore it helps isolate the effect of religious conflict during state reconstruction from preexisting differences.

A final concern about potential endogeneity or selection is that variation in state fiscal capacity responded to prior and more consequential instances of violence or insurgency, which in

turn are also associated to the incidence of Cristero resistance to the postrevolutionary state. Dell shows a systematic negative association between insurgency in the period 1910-1918 and both long-run economic development and alternations in power between different parties (2012), which suggests that revolutionary violence itself might have had important implications for the development of state capacity. If violence also tended to recur in the same spatial locations, contention during the state-building period—as captured by my measure of Cristero insurgency—could be secondary to the effects of the armed phase of the Revolution.

To untangle the relationship between these two episodes of conflict and the psotrevolutionary state's fiscal capacity, I include a binary indicator of whether the municipality experienced insurgent violence during the armed phase of the Revolution between 1910 and 1917. I hand-coded this variable for 2,176 municipalities relying on multiple national, regional, and local histories of the Revolution.[58] This dataset extends Dell's coding of 217 municipalities (2012) to the entire country and represents the most complete and disaggregated quantitative source on the Mexican Revolution available to date. Because this is an important data contribution of this study, I include a map of this variable as Figure 2.8 in the chapter Appendix.

[58] Following Dell's definition, a municipality was considered to have insurgent activity if "its citizens used violent force in a sustained attempt to subvert representatives of the Mexican government (i.e. local authorities and the military) or to confiscate others' property" (2012).

Establishing the geography of historical revolutionary violence at this level of disaggregation of course entailed a number of significant challenges, and making informed judgment calls was inevitable. In the vast majority of cases, however, clearly identifying the municipalities that experienced insurgency in each state was possible by triangulating between different sources. Consulted sources included INAFED's Encyclopedia of Mexican Municipalities (2010), canonical works on the Mexican Revolution, military histories, biographies, memoirs, and multiple secondary sources focused on specific states and regions.

I first used geographic references in the sources to code the location of insurrections and violent events, following conservative coding criteria. Municipalities were coded positively only when clear indication existed that it witnessed violent acts of resistance. For example, when an armed group passed through a municipality but no evidence existed that local inhabitants actively participated in insurgent activity, I did not code the municipality positively. After this initial step, I used municipalities' names to conduct a comprehensive search of each municipality with missing data.

Ultimately, information could not be traced for approximately 200 of the current municipalities in the country (less than 10% of the total). For all other cases, a list with information for each municipality that experienced violence or insurgent activity, as well as the relevant source and page number that supports the coding, is available from the author. I thank Ana Paula Peñalva for her excellent research assistance with this part of the present study.

2.3.4 Results

I start the empirical analysis by estimating a series of ordinary-least-squares models of the form:

$$revenue_i = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 insurgency_i + \boldsymbol{X}_i'\beta + \varepsilon_i ,$$

where $revenue_i$ is the natural log of per capita tax revenue in tax office *i* in 1940. $insurgency_i$ measures the share of municipalities within office *i* where rebellion occurred during the Cristero War. X_i is a vector of control variables, and γ_1 is the coefficient of interest.

Table 2.1 presents the results. Models include all 55 federal tax offices in the country, with the exception of those in Mexico City.[59] Column 1 reports the unconditional relationship between the share of municipalities that experienced insurgency during the Cristero War and state fiscal capacity a decade later. The coefficient is statistically different from zero at standard levels and indicates that, on average, tax revenues per head were lower in areas where rebellion had been more prevalent. In the next two columns, I include other covariates to check the robustness of this result. Column 2 adds the measures of socioeconomic development and the roughness of terrain.

Column 3 reports an extended specification that includes controls for population density, preexisting levels of state capacity as measured by the 1900 density of public employees, and the share of municipalities that experienced violence during the armed phase of the Revolution.

[59] Mexico City was historically not administratively divided into municipalities and therefore data is unavailable for most of the explanatory variables. Since the argument concerns the reach of the state, focusing on extraction without considering the capital is also appropriate from a theoretical standpoint. That said, adding tax collection for the four offices in Mexico City and introducing it in the models as a single unit does not change the results.

Table 2.1. Linear models of fiscal capacity in Mexico, 1940-2012

	Dependent variable: Ln per capita domestic federal tax revenues 1940			DV: tax collectors per 1,000 citizens 1940	DV: Ln per capita municipal tax revenues 1945	DV: per capita mun property tax revenues 1945	DV: Average per capita income tax (log) (2000-04)	DV: taxpayers, % pop (2008-2012)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Cristero insurgency[a]	-0.012*	-0.012***	-0.011***	-0.008**	-0.13***	-0.11***	-0.006*	-0.06*
	(-2.39)	(-4.26)	(-3.86)	(-2.72)	(-5.04)	(-8.98)	(-2.05)	(-2.48)
Pop industry and commerce (% 1940)		0.36***	0.35***	0.061	0.08***	0.002	0.17**	1.65**
		(9.29)	(7.24)	(1.18)	(10.39)	(0.67)	(3.15)	(3.30)
Terrain roughness[b]		-0.001*	-0.001*	-0.001†	-0.0002*	-0.00009*	-0.0009†	-0.009*
		(-2.57)	(-2.16)	(-1.76)	(-2.48)	(-1.97)	(-1.89)	(-2.31)
Pop. density (1930)			-0.006	-0.01	-0.00004	0.0004†	-0.0002	0.03**
			(-0.96)	(-1.4)	(-0. 23)	(1.92)	(-0.17)	(2.57)
Bureaucrats per 1,000 (1900)			0.012	0.23***	0.08***	0.03***	-0.03	-0.09
			(0.39)	(4.57)	(7.55)	(3.48)	(-0.88)	(-0.29)
Revolution insurgency[a]			-0.0002	-0.001	0.09**	0.03†	0.0004	0.04
			(-0.07)	(-0.21)	(3.46)	(1.78)	(0.11)	(1.03)
Constant	2.07***	0.7*	0.78*	1.71**	0.65***	0.1***	6.79***	19.27***
	(10.8)	(2.49)	(2.16)	(3.4)	(23.33)	(5.87)	(21.89)	(5.38)
R^2	0.12	0.7	0.71	0.53	0.41	0.13	0.41	0.65
Observations	55	55	55	55	1, 247	1, 246	55	56

Each model is an OLS regression with heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors. The parentheses contain t statistics.

[a] In models 1-4 and 7-8, Cristero insurgency is coded as the share of municipalities that experienced insurgency within the area covered by a federal tax collection office. In models 5 and 6 the unit of analysis is the municipality and the variable indicates whether the municipality experienced insurgency (binary).

[b] In models 5 and 6 represents the standard deviation of localities within a municipality. In other columns, it is the standard deviation of the altitude of all towns serving as seats of municipal government within a tax office.

† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

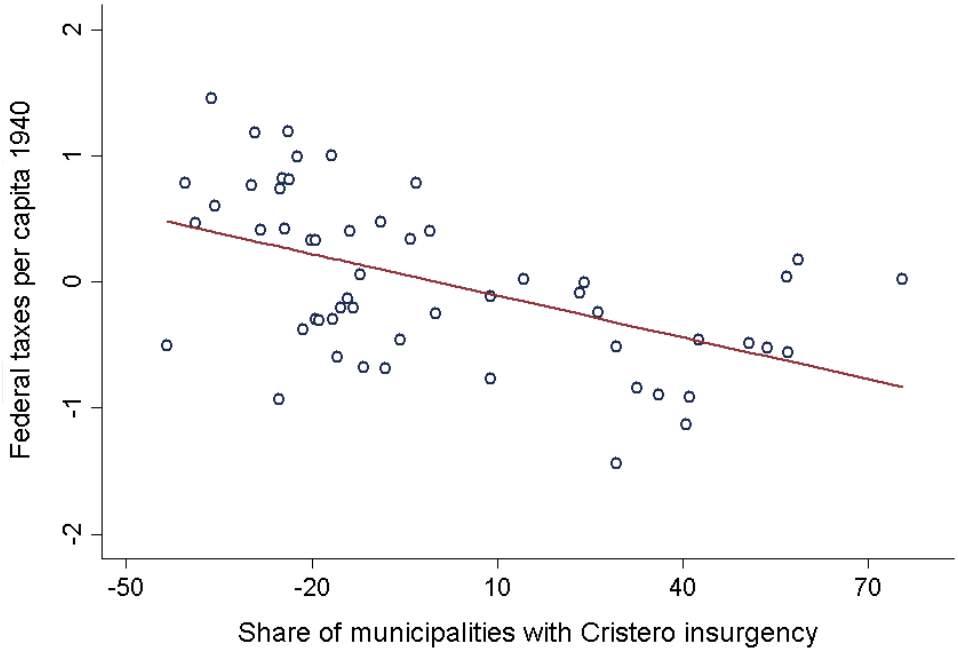
Both the estimated coefficient for the Cristero insurgency variable and the standard error remain stable across specifications. The coefficient in column 3 implies that for every percentage point increase in the share of municipalities that experienced insurgency, national government revenues per head decrease by 1.1%.[60] To help appreciate the substantive importance of this result, a one standard deviation increase in the measure of Cristero insurgency is associated with a reduction of approximately 35% in per capita tax revenues. Controlling for potential confounding factors does not change this conclusion.

In Figure 2.4 below, I show this core result graphically. The plot shows the *partial* correlation between the share of municipalities that rebelled during the Cristero War and per capita federal tax revenues in 1940, while holding constant socioeconomic development, levels of state presence before the Revolution, and all the other variables in column 3 of Table 2.1.[61]

[60] Given that I estimate log-level models, the exact percent change in the outcome variable for a one-unit change in the predictor is given by the formula: $\%\Delta y = \left(100\hat{\beta}\right)\Delta x = (100 \cdot -0.011)1 = -1.1\%$

[61] The graph is constructed by computing residuals from regressing the outcome variable on the explanatory variables while omitting the variable of interest (in this case Cristero insurgency), and then plotting them against the residuals from regressing the target explanatory variable against the other explanatory variables. The axes in Figure 2.4 include both negative and positive numbers because the residuals are centered at zero.

Figure 2.4. Partial relationship between Cristero War insurgency (1926-1929) and federal fiscal capacity in 1940



Note: The plot shows the adjusted relationship between religious insurgency and per capita federal tax revenues, holding constant other determinants of fiscal capacity included in model 3 of Table 2.1. The axes include negative numbers because the plot is constructed by computing residuals that are centered at zero (see footnote 61).

The most consistently significant control variables are the levels of socioeconomic development and terrain roughness. As expected, the national state extracted more per head in wealthier regions. Difficult terrain is negatively associated with the state's fiscal performance, which lends support to geographic arguments. The estimated coefficients for population density, levels of state capacity prior to the Revolution, and revolutionary insurgency are not statistically different from zero when federal tax intake is the outcome variable.

The results in columns 1-3 support the argument that patterns of popular resistance to the ideologies and policies of postrevolutionary state builders shaped the internal development of extractive capacity. However, as an output-based measure, per capita tax revenue reflects both

qualities of state infrastructure as well as society's willingness to comply (Fukuyama 2013). From this result it is not possible to determine whether insurgency affected state investments in fiscal and administrative capabilities, or instead the state made uniform efforts throughout territory that resulted in uneven outcomes due to differences in tax compliance.

To gain more insight into the state's intentions and allocation of infrastructural resources to implement tax policy, column 4 replicates the specification in column 3 but with the number of tax collectors per 10,000 citizens as the dependent variable. The coefficient for the prevalence of Cristero insurgency is negative and precisely estimated. A one standard deviation increase in this variable is associated with a decrease in the density of tax collectors per population of 0.27. This result lends support to the institutional mechanism outlined in section 1.2 of chapter 1, holding that the structure of political conflict in which state-builders are embedded leads them to make uneven investments in state infrastructure across territory. The central state appears to have deliberately maintained a thinner fiscal presence in areas where Catholic antipathy to the new state had spawned rebellion, possibly anticipating poorer returns to fiscal efforts and/or in an attempt to buy popular quiescence.

Notice, however, that this does not constitute evidence against the "bottom-up," attitudinal mechanism that, in my theoretical framework, also connects sharp cleavages to subnational state capacity outcomes. To the contrary, state-builders appear to have incorporated political Catholics' disinclination to cooperate with the postrevolutionary state into their very decisions about the allocation of institutional effort. Through these interrelated channels, the struggle between insiders and outsiders to the state-building coalition had strong fiscal effects.

Interestingly, the number of public employees per 1,000 in 1900 is positively correlated with the density of tax personnel in 1940, suggesting relative stability in patterns of bureaucratic

deployment between the pre- and postrevolutionary periods. Taking this continuity into account, however, does not alter the conclusion that the structure of political conflict *after* the Revolution had a substantial independent impact on the development of fiscal institutions.

Columns 5 and 6 in Table 2.1 examine the relationship between the Cristero Rebellion and local fiscal capacity in the mid-1940s. Municipal governments accounted for less than 5% of total government expenditures in 1945. Despite their poverty, they were responsible for important state functions, including public safety, sanitation, and other public goods. This part of the analysis tests if armed resistance shaped fiscal performance at the local level and serves as a robustness check. The sample size increases to some 1,250 observations for which it was possible to recover historical data from the archives (see footnote 54 above). The main independent variable is a dummy variable that takes the value of one if the municipality experienced insurgency between 1926 and 1929.

The coefficients for both (log) municipal revenues per capita and (log) property tax revenues per head are negative and significant at conventional levels, after controlling for potential confounders. This suggests that local extractive capacity, like the national state's, tended to lag behind in areas that experienced greater armed mobilization. The effects are large, as per capita municipal revenues were 13% lower on average in municipalities that participated in the Cristero War.

Long-term effects

As a final exercise, I investigate whether historical patterns of religious contention, as captured by Cristero insurgency, are systematically associated with contemporary fiscal outcomes. Columns 7 and 8 in Table 2.1 test for this possibility. As before, the analysis is

conducted at the tax office level. The outcome variable in column 7 is the (log) per capita income tax revenue within each federal tax office, averaged from 2000 to 2004, the first five years after the end of the postrevolutionary authoritarian regime. Figures include business and personal income taxes. Focusing on the personal income tax exclusively would be a better measure of the ability to fiscally penetrate society, but data are not available. Nevertheless, the coefficient for the Cristero War indicator is negative and statistically significant. The relationship is substantively important, as one standard deviation increase in the share of municipalities with insurgency is associated with approximately 20% lower income tax revenues per person.[62] A graphical representation of the partial correlation between these variables, holding the other factors included in model 7 constant, appears in the Appendix as Figure 2.6.

Column 8 reports results for the model with the average share of the total population that were registered as individual taxpayers between 2008 and 2012.[63] This variable captures the extent to which citizens in a given geographical area "exist" for the state for fiscal purposes, and therefore it is a good indicator of state strength. The Cristero War coefficient is negative and precisely estimated, with a one standard deviation increase in the share of municipalities that experienced rebellion between 1926-1929 associated with a two percentage point decrease in the share of the population that are registered to pay taxes in the contemporary period. Although the exact mechanism cannot be investigated from these data, the long-run correlation is suggestive of an entrenched culture of noncompliance with tax obligations in some regions, which dates back to political struggles during the formative years of the state.

[62] The exact percent change in the outcome variable is given by the formula: $\%\Delta y = \left(100\hat{\beta}\right)\Delta x = (100 \cdot -0.00633.4 = -20\%$

[63] As mentioned above, 2008 was the first available year from the Tax Administration Service (SAT).

Overall, these empirical results are consistent with the argument that the cleavages structuring postrevolutionary state-building, and in particular spatial patterns of societal resistance to the anticlerical policies of the state-building coalition, had important implications for the state's capacity to generate fiscal income. The next section examines subnational patterns of fiscal capacity development in Colombia to show that in that case, too, historical hegemonic struggles played an important role.

2.4 Partisan Conflict and Uneven State Formation in Colombia

2.4.1 The Uneven Fiscal State in Colombia

A profound transformation in the ability of the state to penetrate society for fiscal purposes took place during the 1930s and 1940s in Colombia, decisively changing the structure of taxation. Even to a greater extent than in Mexico, customs duties remained the main source of public funds for the Colombian state all throughout the nineteenth century, exposing it to the fluctuations of world markets and maintaining it far removed from its own society (Deas 1982). But Colombia's trade volume was also comparatively lower and the economy poorer than in Mexico, and the country experienced no parallel to Porfirian state-building. As a result, the state possessed very limited spending capacities during the first century after independence.[64] As several scholars have argued, there was little in the way of a state in Colombia at the end of the nineteenth century (Saylor 2014; Soifer 2015).

The weak Colombian state's heavy dependence on taxes on foreign trade, and hence its almost nil engagement with society, only began to change in the 1930s. The structure of fiscal

[64] Absolute per capita fiscal revenues in 1871 were one-third those of Mexico and were estimated to represent only 2% of the national product (Deas 1982). By comparison, the best available data indicate a tax-to-GDP ratio of 3.3% for Mexico in 1877 (INEGI 2015).

revenue and the relative capacities of the state in fact changed dramatically. The 1930 elections, held in the context of the Great Depression, put an end to almost half a century of Conservative Party hegemony and initiated a decisive historical era known as the "Liberal Republic" (1930-46). Liberal administrations implemented a series of state-building measures that substantially strengthened the Colombian state and expanded its weight in social life (Roldán 2002; Safford and Palacios 2002). The main increase in fiscal capacity initiated in the mid-1930s, when the more radical Liberal administration of Alfonso López Pumarejo introduced reforms to consolidate the income tax—adopted in 1918—and other direct taxes on property and income (Junguito and Rincón 2007).

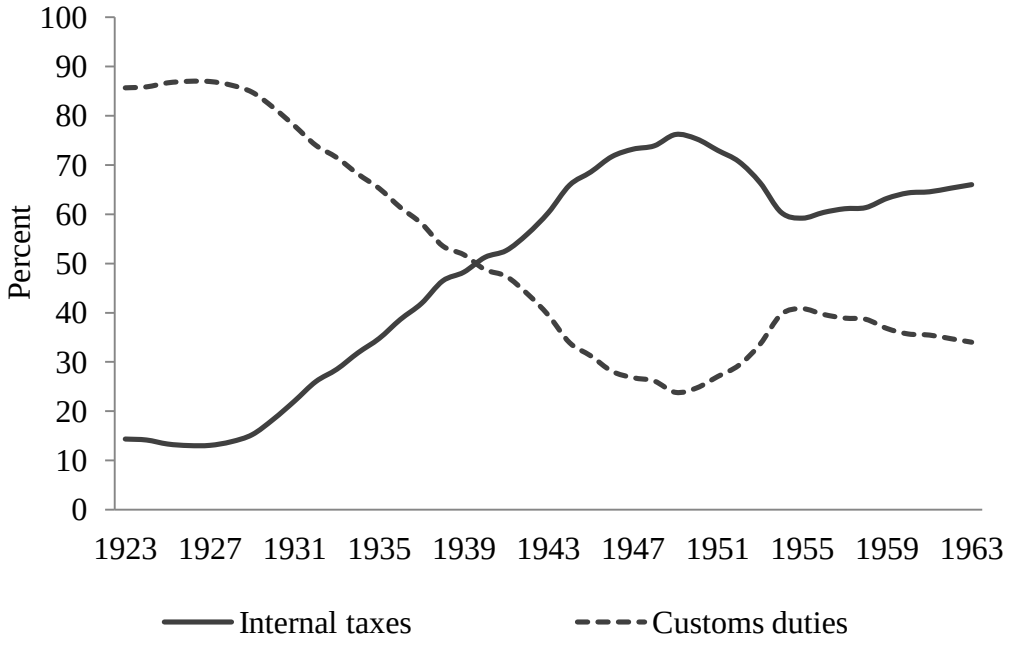
It is difficult to overstate the expansion of infrastructural power signaled by the ensuing shift in the structure of taxation. Figure 2.5 shows the dramatic increase in the share of national government revenue derived from internal taxes during the Liberal Republic, and the concomitant decrease in the relative importance of customs duties. The graph shows the structure of state finances over four decades starting in 1923, the first year for which systematic data are available. As is clear, during the four Liberal administrations between 1930 and 1946 internal taxes decisively became the main source of government revenue. This signals a significant change in the territorial reach of the Colombian state and in state-society relations—indeed the establishment, for the first time, of something resembling a fiscal contract.

Importantly, a significant portion of the increase in internal taxation came from direct taxes, especially the income tax. On average, direct taxes represented less than 7% of national government revenues between 1923 and 1934; by the mid-1940s, they comprised more than half of fiscal state resources.[65] In other words, the Colombian state overturned more than a century of

[65] See Figure 2.5 for sources.

fiscal history in just a decade, going from an almost complete reliance on customs duties to deriving the majority of its income from direct taxes, the most visible, politically sensitive, and administratively demanding.[66]

Figure 2.5. Sources of national tax revenue in Colombia, 1923-1963 (five-year moving averages)



Source: Own calculations based on Contraloría General de la República (1924, 1937, 1942, 1949, 1951a), Ministerio de Hacienda y Crédito Público (1930), and DANE (1999). Internal taxes include all direct and indirect taxes collected by the federal government. Five-year moving averages are shown to remove year-specific fluctuations.

Yet as in the case of Mexico, these aggregate national-level figures are insufficient to properly characterize the process of fiscal state-building, as they mask substantial territorial

[66] The tax burden as a share of GDP did not increase during the Liberal Republic. Between 1925 and 1929, it averaged 4.1%. In 1946, when Conservatives returned to power, it stood at 4.3% (see Figure 2.5 for sources). This was a low figure even by Latin American standards. However, the change in fiscal capacity relative to the past is clear from the state's ability to almost fully reverse the proportion of those revenues that came from customs duties versus internal taxes, as well as to impose direct taxes on income and wealth. Moreover, the economy had also grown, and therefore the state had overall more resources to spend.

unevenness. Regional differences in stateness of course existed prior to this period (Acemoglu, García-Jimeno, and Robinson 2015), but the overwhelming dominance of taxation on foreign trade reveals a pervasive inability of the central state to infrastructurally penetrate territory and society. With the sudden shift to internal taxation observed during twentieth-century state-building, however, within-country variations deepened and became more substantially important.

By the end of the Liberal Republic in 1946, for example, direct national tax revenue *per capita* in the department of Cundinamarca (including the capital Bogotá) was 200 times larger than in the neighboring department of Boyacá. The income tax and other direct taxes produced 50 times more per person in the department of Atlántico than in Huila or Cauca, 21 times more in Antioquia than in Magdalena, and 9 times more in Valle del Cauca than in Tolima. The average contribution in the country was 7.44 Colombian pesos, again considering only direct taxes; comparing departments yields a standard deviation of 8.26.[67]

To be sure, these differences reflect the fact that some regions were considerably wealthier. There are no disaggregated data on per capita GDP for this historical period, but as I emphasized in chapter 1, state capacity is itself a strong determinant of economic outcomes (Dincecco and Katz 2016). Moreover, below I show that the variation in tax collection across Colombia is not simply a byproduct of levels of economic development. Instead, political cleavage structures play an important independent role in explaining why the state gained greater ability to generate tax revenues in some places than in others.

[67] Own calculations based on Contraloría General de la República (1951, 59). Population figures for 1946 were obtained by linearly interpolating data from the two most proximate censuses (1938 and 1951).

2.4.2 Fiscal State Building under Exclusionary Partisan Cultures

I argue that, as in the Mexican postrevolutionary experience, political alignments vis-à-vis the state-building coalition had important implications for the fiscal reach of the Colombian state. In this case, the main cleavage pitted Liberals against Conservatives, two camps that at the time of the Liberal Republic had struggled for hegemony for almost a century. The War of the Thousand Days (1899-1902) was the last and most murderous of the nine major civil wars between these political formations during the nineteenth century (Deas 2015). The partisan wars, rooted in elite disputes about federalism and the role of the Church had enduring consequences for the country's political system. Importantly, they prematurely divided the masses along sharply defined party lines, before state structures consolidated.

In addition to armed mobilization and the grievances produced during civil wars, intense competition during electoral contests contributed to the precocious politicization of Colombian society (Bushnell 1993; Safford and Palacios 2002). Throughout its independent history, Colombia maintained a long tradition of competitive elections that played a key role in the reproduction of partisan divides and, as I examine in chapter 5, had important consequences for the formation of state institutions in domains like education.

Early on, then, Colombian society became fractured into well-defined partisan camps contesting for power and willing to engage in violence to subordinate the opponent. The vast majority of Colombians "were born Liberal or Conservative" (Oquist 1980), and in any given locality one of the parties tended to exercise hegemony across elections (Pinzón de Lewin 1989). The depth of sectarian partisan "subcultures" (Hartlyn 1988; Pécaut 2001) made the oligarchic two-party system extraordinarily resilient, and indeed due to the strength of partisan identities

popular pressures associated to the "social question" did not lead to party system transformation in the twentieth century, unlike in most countries in Latin America (Roberts 2014).

To an important degree, the intensity of partisan animosity in the population at large stemmed from the deeply sectarian use of the state apparatus in which both parties engaged while in power. Below the national level, the parties functioned as a set of loosely connected clientelistic machines, sustained by local officeholders through the distribution of patronage to co-partisans and committed to "exterminating the contrary party."[68] Electoral defeat had major consequences on the life chances of citizens aligned with the losing party (Dix 1987; Stoller 1995), as the winner completely locked them out from state services, subjected them to systematic intimidation and harassment, and often used the state apparatus to forcibly convert them to the right cause, in order to achieve electoral dominance. The unitary nature of the political system raised the stakes of electoral competition and the winner-take-all character of electoral contests, as the president appointed departmental governors and these appointed mayors. The governing apparatus could thus turn monolithically Liberal or Conservative. When the opposing party managed to gain access to power, party affiliates set out to avenge the accumulated grievances, reinforcing partisan resentments and producing high levels of political violence.

In this way, the Liberal-Conservative polarity evolved into a system of "hereditary hatreds" that organized not only politics but social life itself. Citizens were confined into exclusive clientelistic networks and tended to lead their lives in politically homogenous communities. Civil society institutions also tended to mirror the partisan fracture. Recreational and cultural associations, educational institutions, the media, and other institutions were typically

[68] Mariano Ospina, Conservative Party founder, quoted in Safford and Palacios (2002, 223).

associated with one side of the cleavage, reproducing at the social level the dialectical struggle between the parties themselves.

As in Mexico, the mobilizing force of the Liberal-Conservative antagonism came in large part from historical struggles about the influence of the Church, which had put down deep roots in both countries. Partisan loyalties would absorb the characteristic intensity of disputes about religion, always retaining quasi-religious overtones (Pécaut 2013).[69] The importance of religion is also patent in the establishment of partisan alignments. In general, Conservatives tended to carry more support where the Catholic Church had been stronger since colonial times (mostly in the Andean highlands), whereas Liberals drew more support from coastal and historically peripheral areas (Safford and Palacios 2002). As I discuss in chapter 5, the Catholic Church acted as an openly partisan force since the formation of the party system.

However, there are multiple exceptions to these broad patterns, and Colombian parties were not simple expressions of underlying societal divides (Dix 1987; Safford and Palacios 2002). Both parties mobilized support from diverse cross-sections of Colombian society, and culturally, socioeconomically, and regionally equivalent towns or municipalities could fall on any side of the partisan divide. Historically, highly idiosyncratic factors had an impact in the determining the allegiance of any given locality at a given juncture, and from then on partisanship shaped its political future. Weinert's point, although perhaps overstated, is well-taken:

> Liberal and Conservative strength varied between states [departments] and within states, but the identification of a town with one or the other party was probably accidental. It perhaps began with the association of a patron in the 19th century with one party, which implied the association of his peons with the same party…By the early 20th century, the original reasons for the

[69] The words of Alfonso López Michelsen, President of Colombia from 1974 to 1978 and son of López Pumarejo are revealing: "In this country there didn't exist political parties properly speaking, but religious sects, closed churches into which one was born and died without real convictions, in the same way as one inherits a religious creed which...must be defended ardently unto death." Quoted in (Weinert 1966, 344).

> association had died, but the association persisted, stimulated occasionally by strife along party lines and partial mobilization for elections (1966, 344).

Thus the partisan antagonism acquired autonomous weight as an organizing political boundary during the struggles of the nineteenth century, and it was sufficient to shape attitudes and behavior without reference to other categories. The point is worth stressing because throughout this dissertation I attribute explanatory power to Liberal-Conservative alignments, and therefore it is key to isolate this variable both conceptually and empirically from other potentially confounding factors.

The expansion of the state's fiscal capacities in the 1930s took place in this context of deeply entrenched partisan loyalties. In the 1930 elections, Conservatives (and the Church) failed to coordinate around a single candidate and Liberals captured the presidency. In general, given the venality of the state and the fusion of state and party when any of the two political forces was in power, the party in opposition only succeeded in presidential contests when the radical and moderate wings inside the parties failed to coordinate. This was again the case in 1946, when Liberals divided and Conservatives recaptured the presidency.[70]

The return of the Liberals after several decades of exclusion from national power coincided with the Great Depression, which reduced the possibility of relying on international markets to generate economic growth and state revenues. Liberals thus embarked in a process of reform that expanded the state's fiscal powers, as well as its social and economic role. The deepest period of reform came after the more radical faction of the party won the 1934 elections. Under the so-called "Revolution on the March" during President López Pumarejo's first administration (1934-1938), Liberals encouraged labor organization, adopted measures to

[70] For a fuller discussion, see chapter 5 in this dissertation.

facilitate peasant access to land, and strengthened the state's role as an arbiter of socioeconomic relations. Although the reach of this process of popular class incorporation was modest compared to other countries in Latin America, it nevertheless reignited partisan polarization and triggered considerable resistance from Conservative economic and political elites.

Moreover, Liberal administrations revealed "a formidable centralizing tendency" (Safford and Palacios 2002, 289) that, in the fiscal arena, materialized in efforts to increase national tax revenues. Immediately after taking power, López Pumarejo created new taxes on wealth and excess profits and introduced measures to consolidate the income tax (Junguito and Rincón 2007). As shown above, this produced a sudden and decisive shift in the structure of taxation, itself reflective of an unprecedented strengthening of the fiscal state.

However, the country's deep partisan cleavage conditioned the success of fiscal state-building across territory, depending on partisan alignments. Excluded from power and fearing the consolidation of Liberal dominance, Conservatives generally resisted the (Liberal) state's attempts at asserting greater fiscal authority. In the city of Medellín, for example, the capital of the predominantly Conservative department of Antioquia, powerful industrial interests aligned with the Conservative Party organized massive demonstrations to resist tax reform. In other departments, like Boyacá, Santander, and Norte Santander, Conservatives complained that Liberals were using the power of the state to persecute Conservative supporters (Guerrero 1991).

Indeed, given the characteristics of the political system, supporters of the party in opposition perceived the state as an openly partisan force, rather than a shared set of institutions that were entitled to be obeyed. When Liberals built the fiscal state and seriously introduced domestic taxation for the first time in the country's history, they were setting the terms of the fiscal contract. By virtue of the intense partisan antagonism that permeated society, however,

they were unable to forge a homogenous agreement with society. The state failed to elicit compliance with its new fiscal demands among a significant social bloc, and thus to develop fiscal institutions and norms of tax compliance uniformly across Colombia. Despite controlling some of the traditionally more developed areas of the country, notably in the department of Antioquia, Conservatives refused to assume greater tax obligations. In areas where they held sway, *un*willingness to pay instead became the norm. This pattern of behavior, as I will show below, became a lasting feature of Colombian political life, with important consequences for the state's overall capacities. The results I present document that, as in the case of Mexico, the political struggles surrounding the state-building process shaped internal patterns of state institutional development.

2.4.3 Data

Central state fiscal capacity

To measure the *national* state's extractive capacity throughout territory, I constructed a novel historical dataset on its fiscal performance across territory, using sources collected through extensive archival research. My data allow precise measurement of central authorities' fiscal powers in each Colombian municipality, for a key historical period. I construct my main capacity measure as the per capita income tax contribution in a municipality in 1950. As explained above, direct taxes like the income tax are the best measure of a state's ability to fiscally penetrate society, as they visibly and directly take private resources and turn them into the state's. They require capacity to register citizens and assess wealth, as well as to elicit compliance and exercise power over economic elites.

This variable was hand-coded using the reports of the Comptroller General (Contraloría General de la República 1951b, 1951a). I choose 1950 for questions of data availability, but it is

also an appropriate time to assess the internal patterns of state capacity that emerged from the crucial period of fiscal state-building under the Liberal Party. By 1950, the share of direct taxes had stabilized after the major expansion of the previous decades, the presidency was under the control of the most doctrinaire wing of the Conservative Party, and the relative stability of the first half of the century had turned into high levels of violence and significant political turmoil.

I choose the income tax as my main indicator because it was also the main source behind the increase in direct taxation and, being a very visible and progressive tax, it is a good proxy for the depth of the national state's authority in each municipality. To calculate the per capita revenues, population figures for 1950 were obtained by linearly interpolating data from the two most proximate censuses (1938 and 1951). A map showing the variation in per capita income tax revenues across Colombian municipalities appears as Figure 2.10 in the Appendix.

That said, I also compiled other indicators of the central state's fiscal performance in the municipalities to examine the robustness of the results. In addition to per capita income tax revenues, I use total domestic national tax revenues per head as an alternative that includes all direct and indirect taxes levied by the national government in a given municipality. Data were also hand-coded using the reports of the Comptroller General. This is the same indicator used above to capture national government fiscal capacity in the Mexican case. Table 2.5 in the Appendix shows descriptive statistics for all the variables in the dataset of fiscal capacity in Colombian municipalities used in this chapter.

Local fiscal capacity

I also investigate whether partisan allegiances affected the development of local fiscal institutions, in addition to the national government's ability to collect taxes in the municipalities.

Given the partisan coherence of the state apparatus at the central and local levels in Colombia's historical unitary system, it is likely that we could observe consistent effects across levels of government. As a measure of local fiscal capacity, I use per capita municipal tax revenues, which I also calculated using historical documents obtained during archival research (Contraloría General de la República 1941b, 1941a, 1951b, 1951a).

Municipal governments collected several indirect taxes and the property tax, which has traditionally been resisted by the country's landed elites. Municipal taxes amounted to approximately 10% of total fiscal intake in the country. Unlike national government tax revenues, data on municipal public finances are also available before 1950. This offers an opportunity to evaluate whether the empirical results are robust to the adoption of a different year to measure fiscal performance. I therefore estimate two models of local fiscal capacity, with data for 1940 and 1950.

The specification that employs data for 1940 also helps address the concern that, whatever the patterns of state capacity developed under Liberal state-building, the results for 1950 are driven by the fact that at the time Conservatives were again in power. It is reasonable to worry, for example, that tax enforcement under Conservative governments was stronger in Liberal municipalities. Observed differences could reflect contingent partisan calculations rather than the underlying strength of state institutions responsible for ensuring compliance with tax obligations. Looking at municipal tax revenues in 1940, when the Liberal Party was still in power and the state-building process was already on its way, is the best available strategy to address this concern, given data availability.

Long-term fiscal capacity

To evaluate whether historical conflict along partisan lines is associated with long-run variation in the capacity to extract, I also run models with contemporary measures of the dependent variable. The relevant indicators are municipal tax revenues and property tax revenues, which were obtained from the database compiled by the Center of Economic Development Studies (CEDE) at the Universidad de los Andes. Both are measured per capita in 2005.

Independent variable

Colombia's exceptional democratic tradition in Latin America offers an opportunity to employ electoral data to analyze how the participation or exclusion of different social and political interests in the state-building coalition during crucial historical moments affect subsequent patterns of state fiscal strength. In this case, the relevant cleavage found clear expression in the electoral arena. The main independent variable in the models below is thus a measure of political support for the Conservative Party at the municipality level, which I calculated as the proportion of the vote for Conservative candidates in the 1930 and 1946 presidential elections. Data come from (Oquist 1973). For 1930, I aggregate the vote share for the two conservative candidates that competed against the Liberal Enrique Olaya. A map of the variation in Conservative Party support across municipalities is provided in Figure 2.9 in the Appendix.

I focus on these two elections for several reasons. First, 1930 and 1946 mark the beginning and end of the relevant period of state-building under the Liberal Party. Second, there were no allegations of fraud in any of the two elections. Third, they are the only two presidential

elections contested by both parties in the period. As mentioned, parties' factional use of the state apparatus allowed them to skew the playing field and often led the opposition party to abstain from presidential elections. The Conservative Party abstained from running a candidate in the 1934, 1938, and 1942 elections. Similarly, the Liberal Party refused to participate in 1926, while the 1922 elections were full of irregularities (Posada-Carbó 1997). Thus, as also argued by Oquist (1973), averaging the 1930 and 1946 elections is the best available alternative to accurately capture the historical, underlying level of support for each of the parties in each municipality.

As mentioned above, partisan attachments and hence spatial patterns of electoral support were highly persistent. The correlation coefficient between the 1930 and 1946 Conservative Party vote shares is strong ($\rho = 0.75$, $p<0.001$). Moreover in the majority of the country's municipalities one of the parties was electorally dominant. In 1930, for instance, Liberals or Conservatives obtained more than 70 percent of the vote in 422 of the 687 municipalities for which data are available.

Other variables

My inclusion of control variables is guided by the concern that both the distribution of political support for the parties and fiscal capacity could be driven by factors whose omission would bias the estimated relationship. As in the Mexican case, I control for differences in socioeconomic development, geographic and demographic factors, and historical levels state capacity to address potential issues of selection and confounding. GDP estimates for the period are not available below the national level. To capture relevant socioeconomic factors, I therefore rely on two measures: the proportion of the municipal population living in urban areas, and the

literacy rate, which are available from the 1951 census and I obtained from Chacón, Robinson, and Torvik (2011). My geographic measure is the proportion of municipal land that is classified as mountainous. This indicator is from the Colombian National Geographic Institute and was obtained from Acemoglu, García-Jimeno, and Robinson (2015).

Unfortunately, indicators of state capacity at the municipal level are not available for the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. Failing to control for preexisting differences in state capacity would be problematic if these determined both partisanship and the distribution of fiscal capacity at the end of the Liberal Republic. As I explained in the previous section, however, the distribution of support for the parties obeyed to multiple idiosyncratic factors, and municipalities with very similar characteristics could fall on any side of the cleavage. Drawing on the specialized literature, Chacón, Robinson, and Torvik make a similar case about the spatial patterns of support for the Colombian parties (2011). Moreover, as also explained above, the early politicization of the masses in Colombia meant that party identification in some sense preceded the development of state capacity. This suggests that, in my case, levels of support for the parties can be reasonably treated as independent of the preexisting distribution of state capacity at the local level. Yet to further address this concern, I control for a still deeper measure of state presence in the late colonial period. The relevant indicator is the total number of crown employees in the municipality. The data are originally from Durán y Díaz (1794) and are available from Acemoglu and his coauthors (2015).

As a final strategy to deal with potential endogeneity, some specifications below include departmental fixed effects. Historically, a varied and difficult geography—the Andes branch off into three different mountain ranges as they enter Colombian territory—was a major obstacle to physical, economic, and cultural integration across regions (Safford and Palacios 2002). As a

result, Colombian departments developed many different features that could be responsible for the differences in fiscal capacity that I attribute to the structure of support for the parties. By adding fixed effects, coefficients are identified relying only on within-department variation across municipalities, which accounts for these broader geographic, economic, and cultural differences across Colombian regions.

2.4.4 Results

I test whether partisan differences affected the outcomes of state-building by running a series of ordinary-least-squares regressions of the following form:

$$revenue_i = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 conservative_i + \boldsymbol{X}_i'\beta + \alpha_{d(i)} + \varepsilon_i ,$$

where $revenue_i$ represents the natural log of per capita fiscal revenues in municipality i. $conservative_i$ measures the average proportion of the vote share won by Conservative candidates in the 1930 and 1946 elections in municipality i. X_i is a vector that contains control variables, and and $\alpha_{d(i)}$ is a departmental fixed effect for municipality i located in department d. γ_1 is the coefficient of interest.

Table 2.2 and Table 2.3 present the results. The specifications in columns 1 to 4 of Table 2.2 use the natural logarithm of per capita income tax revenues as the dependent variable. Column 1 is the baseline specification, where I include only the measure of Conservative Party support and a dummy variable indicating if the municipality is a department capital. Column 2 adds controls for socioeconomic development and topography. Column 3 further includes population density and the measure of colonial state presence. Column 4 adds a full set of departmental fixed effects.

Table 2.2. Linear models of central fiscal capacity in Colombia, 1950

	Dependent variable: per capita income tax revenues 1950 (log)				DV: per capita national domestic tax revenues 1950 (log)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Conservative Party support	-0.18***	-0.17***	-0.15***	-0.103**	-0.17*
	(-5.00)	(-4.91)	(-4.68)	(-3.12)	(-2.49)
Department capital	1.72***	1.37***	1.02***	0.88***	1.59***
	(6.74)	(6.11)	(6.48)	(6.74)	(11.27)
Urbanization (1951)		0.61***	0.51***	0.63***	1.12***
		(4.59)	(4.4)	(5.21)	(5.96)
Literacy (1951)		0.38***	0.24**	0.066	0.68***
		(4.17)	(2.65)	(0.61)	(4.13)
Mountainous land		0.057	0.039	-0.009	0.12
		(1.21)	(0.96)	(-0.17)	(1.57)
Population density (1950)			0.002***	0.002***	0.001***
			(4.13)	(4.96)	(6.55)
Crown employees (1794)			0.0002	0.0002***	0.0002***
			(1.59)	(4.0)	(4.7)
Constant	0.25***	-0.13*	-0.099*	-0.07	0.0001
	(10.52)	(-2.17)	(-2.07)	(-0.95)	(0.00)
Departmental fixed effects	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.49	0.59	0.66	0.73	0.7
Observations	641	634	634	634	689

All models are OLS regressions with heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors. The parentheses contain t statistics.
† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

The main result is that support for the Conservative Party is negatively correlated with per capita income tax revenues. The result is consistent with the argument that the unprecedented development of national state extractive capacity in the 1930s and 1940s lagged behind in more Conservative municipalities. The coefficient is statistically significant at conventional levels in all four specifications. Conditional on departmental fixed effects, preexisting state capacity, and geographic, socioeconomic, and demographic controls (model 4), a one standard deviation increase in the proportion of historical support for the Conservative Party is associated with a 2.8% decrease in the revenues generated by the income tax, per person, in 1950.

As could be expected, higher levels of socioeconomic development, and particularly higher urbanization rates, are positively associated with extraction. Municipalities located in more mountainous land, however, are not systematically different from others in terms of the ability of the national government to raise taxes.

Column 5 in Table 2.2 looks at the relationship between Conservative Party support and collection of all types of national domestic taxes. The results are consistent with those related to the income tax. The relevant coefficient is statistically significant and its magnitude substantive. After accounting for potential confounders and department-specific effects, a one standard deviation increase in average support for the Conservative Party is associated with a 4.6 percent decrease in per capita tax revenues.

Turning to Table 2.3 below, columns 1 and 2 examine whether the relationship is also present with local government's fiscal capacity, measured in 1950 and alternatively in 1940. Regardless of the party holding national power, Conservative Party support is consistently correlated with lower per capita tax contributions. The magnitude of the effects is similar to those observed for the national government.

Lastly, columns 3 and 4 in Table 2.3 show that the historical cleavage prevalent during the expansion of state capacity in the first half of the twentieth century remains associated with patterns of local fiscal performance in the contemporary period. Although the coefficients decrease in size compared to previous models, they remain statistically significant at conventional levels and indicate that local fiscal institutions are weaker on average where the Conservative Party was stronger. According to the coefficient in model 8, a one standard deviation increase in historical Conservative support is associated with approximately 0.6% less municipal tax collection per person in 2005.

Table 2.3. Linear models of local fiscal capacity in Colombia, 1940-2005

	DV: per capita municipal tax revenues 1950 (log)	DV: per capita municipal tax revenues 1940 (log)	DV: per capital municipal tax revenues 2005 (log)	DV: per capital property tax revenues 2005 (log)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Conservative Party support	-0.18***	-0.19***	-0.02**	-0.01**
	(-3.59)	(-6.68)	(-2.92)	(-2.76)
Department capital	0.48***	0.25***	0.02*	0.01*
	(4.42)	(3.72)	(2.18)	(2.07)
Urbanization (1951)	0.76***	0.46***	0.01	0.005
	(5.68)	(5.7)	(0.69)	(0.81)
Literacy (1951)	0.76***	0.39***	0.14***	0.04***
	(5.13)	(4.9)	(5.63)	(4.26)
Mountainous land	-0.14*	-0.06	-0.05***	-0.008
	(-2.28)	(-1.59)	(-3.59)	(-1.49)
Population density (1950)	0.001***	0.001***	0.0001*	0.00002†
	(5.23)	(8.46)	(2.41)	(1.9)
Crown employees (1794)	0.0002***	0.00002	0.00002***	0.00002***
	(4.1)	(0.76)	(7.15)	(11.04)
Constant	0.52***	0.28***	0.04***	0.01†
	(7.91)	(5.37)	(2.82)	(1.96)
Departmental fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.63	0.7	0.35	0.32
Observations	702	701	721	721

All models are OLS regressions with heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors. The parentheses contain t statistics.
† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

These results uncover important new empirical patterns in the relationship between political conflict and the development of state capacity in Colombia. The econometric results complement my historical analysis and support the argument that state-building efforts achieved varying degrees of success as a result of the political cleavages that split society and structured Colombian politics at the time. Although the state's ability to penetrate society and impose domestic taxes on its population clearly expanded beginning in the 1930s, the results suggests that deep partisan polarization during a decisive historically period yielded territorially uneven

patterns of institutional development that durably limited what the state could accomplish, and who bore, in practice, the fiscal burden.

2.5 Conclusions

This chapter presents new evidence about the historical sources of within-country variation in fiscal capacity. I introduce new, comprehensive, and territorially-disaggregated historical datasets on the development of fiscal institutions in Mexico and Colombia, drawn from previously untapped archival sources. Within-case historical analyses and statistical results suggest that patterns of political contention and societal support for the state-building coalition during formative historical periods had important and enduring effects on state development. Despite important differences between the two countries, in both cases the state's ability to raise tax revenues across territory reflected deep-seated cleavages that divided societies as state infrastructures were being built.

In Mexico, postrevolutionary state-building efforts triggered strong defensive reactions along a sharp religious cleavage. The most salient of these political responses was the Catholic insurgency that emerged to contest state anticlericalism in the late 1920s. Drawing on novel, hand-coded data on the incidence of conflict, I presented evidence that popular resistance to state projects along this social fracture enduringly undermined the state's ability to cultivate fiscal compliance and extract tax revenue. Having failed to develop homogenous fiscal institutions and a sense of obligation among the citizenry during a key historical juncture, the Mexican state's overall fiscal powers would continue to suffer, limiting its governing capacities in other realms.

In Colombia, a coalition dominated by the Liberal Party embarked on an unprecedented project of state-building in the 1930s, expanding the state's scope and making direct taxes the

main source of fiscal revenues, all in a country where governments had historically depended on external revenues and lacked meaningful territorial presence. For the first time, the Colombian state established a relationship with citizens as taxpayers. As in Mexico, however, state-building efforts unfolded over the basis of a deep political fracture. The sectarian partisan political culture that permeated society had important implications for the geography of fiscal capacity. Indeed, support for the Conservative Party during the period of Liberal state-building correlated negatively with the state's subsequent fiscal performance.

These findings have important implications for our understanding of the origins and preconditions of extractive capacity, as well as the effects of cleavages on the nature of the fiscal contract. The formation of states lacking the institutional means to regularly extend their fiscal authority over territory is an important puzzle in the study of political development. My theoretical argument traces the territorially uneven ability of states to link with their societies for the purposes of extraction to historical state-building projects characterized by intense factionalism and, relatedly, to the deep-seated political divisions that often underlay the rise of states in Latin America and beyond. Depending on who builds the fiscal state, we may observe substantial and enduring differences on where, and who, can governments tax.

My argument thus moves beyond structural and geographic explanations to highlight the political roots of within-country variation in the ability of the state to elicit tax compliance and perform one of the core functions of any modern state. The findings suggest that political power configurations during critical periods of state formation are crucial to understand the uneven effectiveness of fiscal institutions. They also indicate that in the absence of sustained external pressures—like the ones faced by Western European states—or other sources of internal cohesion, domestic political oppositions are likely to create sharp variation in state development

across a national territory. Finally, the evidence I provide suggests that states' fiscal strength is inherently relational, as it depends on the interplay between states and the societies they rule. In such interaction, cleavage politics plays a large role.

2.6 Appendix

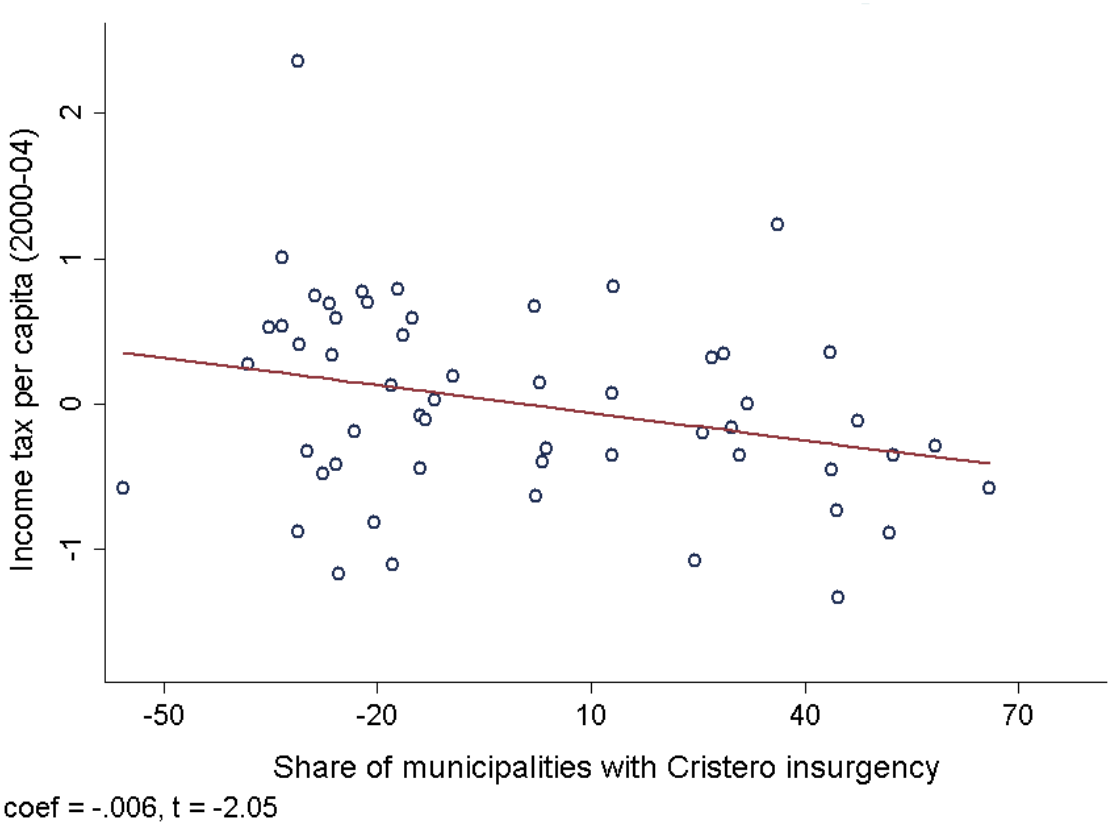
Table 2.4. Descriptive statistics. Dataset on religious insurgency and fiscal capacity in Mexico

	Obs	M	SD	Min	Max
Models for federal fiscal capacity in 1940, tax-office level					
Per capita federal tax revenues (1940)	55	9.9	12.67	0.77	73.21
Tax collectors per 1,000 citizens (1940)	55	1.77	1.14	0.46	6.19
Cristero War insurgency, % of municipalities	55	27.82	32.04	0	100
Population in industry and commerce (1940), %	55	4.9	1.99	1.67	9.95
Terrain roughness (std. dev. of municipal altitudes)	55	352	216	10.22	803
Population density (1930)	55	15.39	14.63	0.5	54.92
Bureaucrats per 1,000 citizens (1900)	55	2.32	2.36	0.43	15.69
Mexican Revolution insurgency, % of municipalities	55	44.71	25.92	4.17	100
Models for local fiscal capacity in 1945, municipal level					
Per capita municipal government tax revenues (1945)	1,247	2.56	7.35	0	186.99
Per capita property tax revenues (1945)	1,246	0.19	0.53	0	7.94
Cristero War insurgency, (binary)	1,247	0.3	0.46	0	1
Population in industry and commerce (1940), %	1,247	3.36	3.09	0	22.3
Terrain roughness (std. dev. of localities' altitudes)	1,247	181.57	157.08	0.33	1,086
Population density (1930)	1,247	33.4	74.88	0.16	1,538
Bureaucrats per 1,000 citizens (1900)	1,247	1.54	2.25	0	25.05
Mexican Revolution insurgency, (binary)	1,247	0.38	0.49	0	1
Models for federal fiscal capacity in 2000s, tax-office level					
Per capita income tax revenues (average 2000-04)	55	1,878	1,988	167.98	11,666
Taxpayers, % of total population (average 2008-2012)	55	25.54	9.53	12.62	68.7
Cristero War insurgency, % of municipalities	55	27.71	33.41	0	100
Population in industry and commerce (1940), %	55	5.35	2.57	1.88	15.9
Terrain roughness (std. dev. of municipal altitudes)	55	5.35	2.57	1.88	15.9
Population density (1930)	55	21.84	57.1	0.14	424.56
Bureaucrats per 1,000 citizens (1900)	55	3.4	4.44	0.55	19.93
Mexican Revolution insurgency, % of municipalities	55	44.86	30.56	0	100

Table 2.5. Descriptive statistics. Dataset on partisan cleavages and fiscal capacity in Colombia

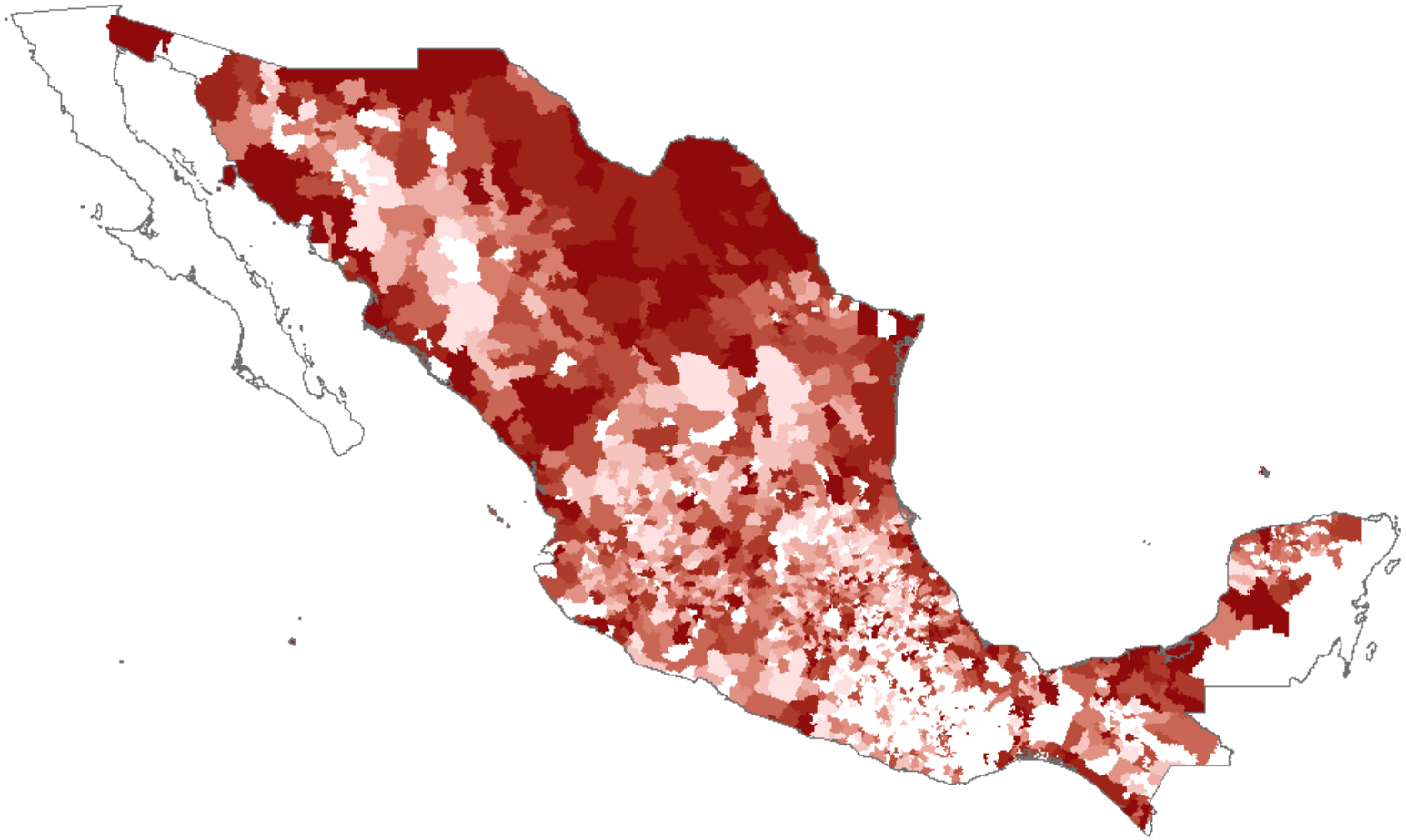
	Obs	M	SD	Min	Max
Dependent variables					
Per capita income tax revenues (1950)	645	0.62	4.51	0	93.64
Per capita national government tax revenues (1950)	700	2.69	11.79	0	199.8
Per capita municipal govt tax revenues (1940)	712	0.61	0.7	0	8.27
Per capita municipal govt tax revenues (1950)	714	2.08	2.73	0	29.17
Per capital municipal tax revenues (2005)	1,096	0.06	0.7	0	0.65
Per capital property tax revenues (2005)	1,096	0.021	0.03	0	0.5
Independent variables					
Conservative Party support (average vote share, 1930 and 1946)	816	0.47	0.27	0	1
Urbanization rate (1951)	756	0.24	0.21	0	1
Literacy rate (1951)	756	0.49	0.15	0.02	0.89
Land classified as mountain (proportion)	1,004	0.68	0.4	0	1
Population density (1950)	730	57.72	97.86	0.34	1,626
Total crown employees (1794)	1,019	5.69	122.86	0	3,844

Figure 2.6. Partial relationship between Cristero War insurgency (1926-1929) and income tax revenues per capita (average 2000-2004)



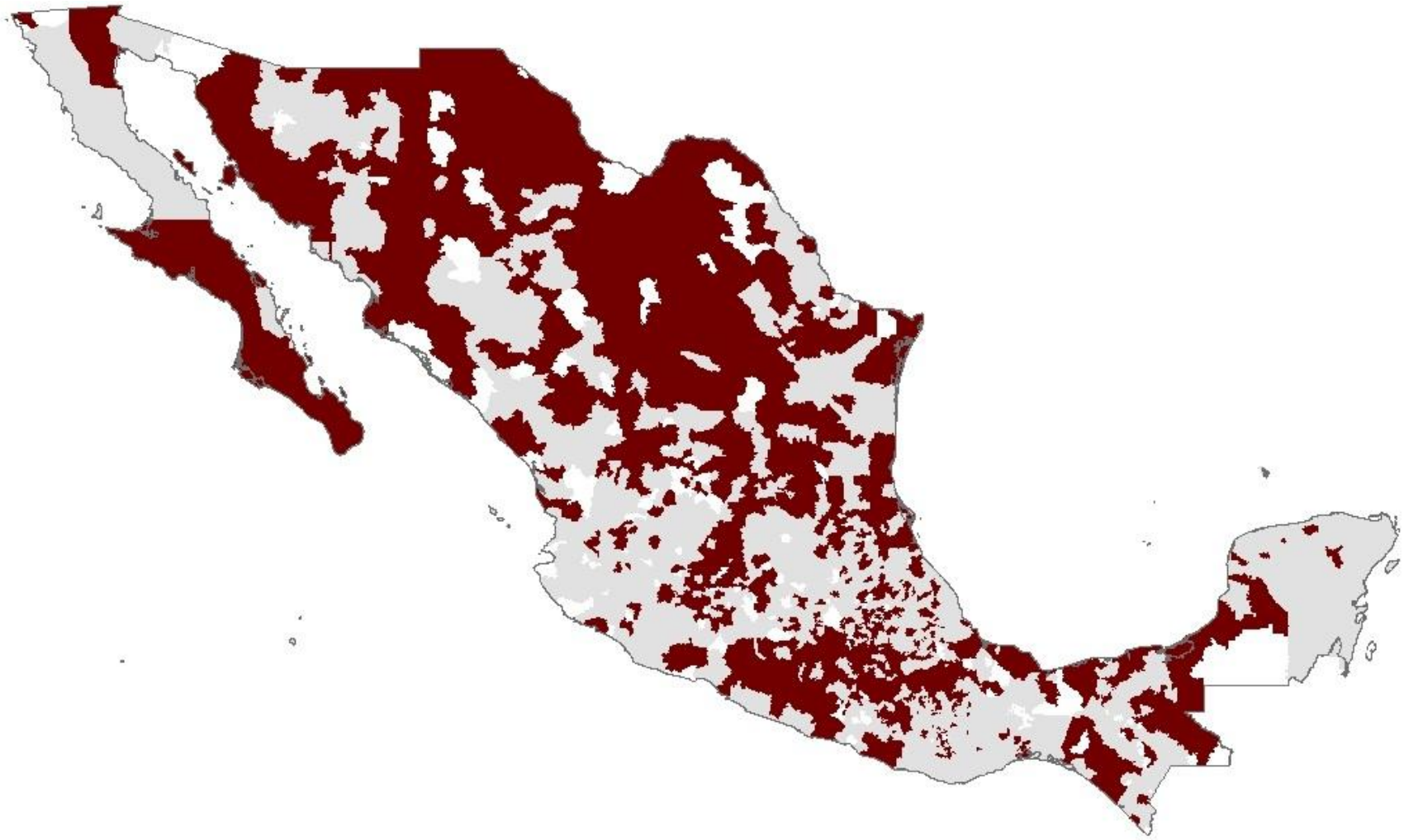
Note: The plot shows the adjusted relationship between religious insurgency and per capita income tax revenues, holding constant other determinants of fiscal capacity included in model 7 of Table 2.1. The axes include negative numbers because the plot is constructed by computing residuals that are centered at zero (see footnote 61 above).

Figure 2.7. Per capita municipal tax revenues in Mexican municipalities, 1945



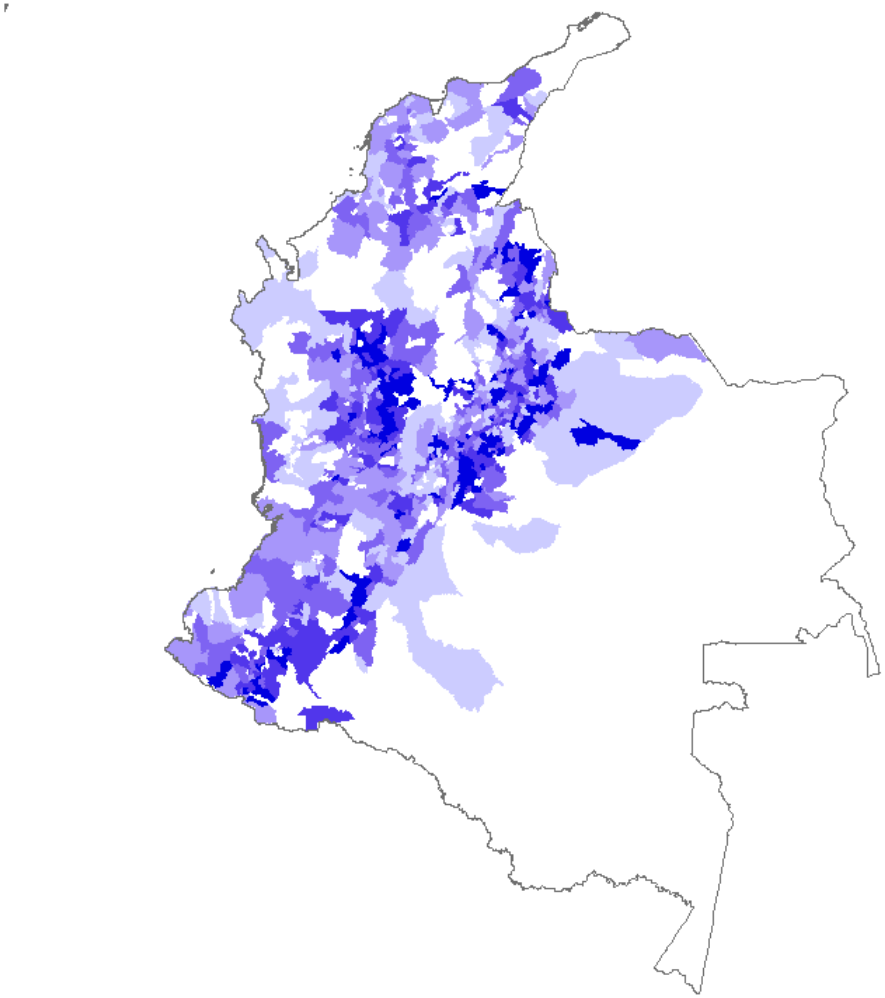
Note: Data were grouped in deciles to color the map. Darker areas represent municipalities with higher local tax revenues per capita in 1945. Figures were calculated using archival materials and include all municipalities whose total revenue exceeded MX $2,000 at the time. Municipalities with missing data and those that did not exist in 1945 appear in white. See footnote 54 for details.

Figure 2.8. Municipalities with insurgency during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917)



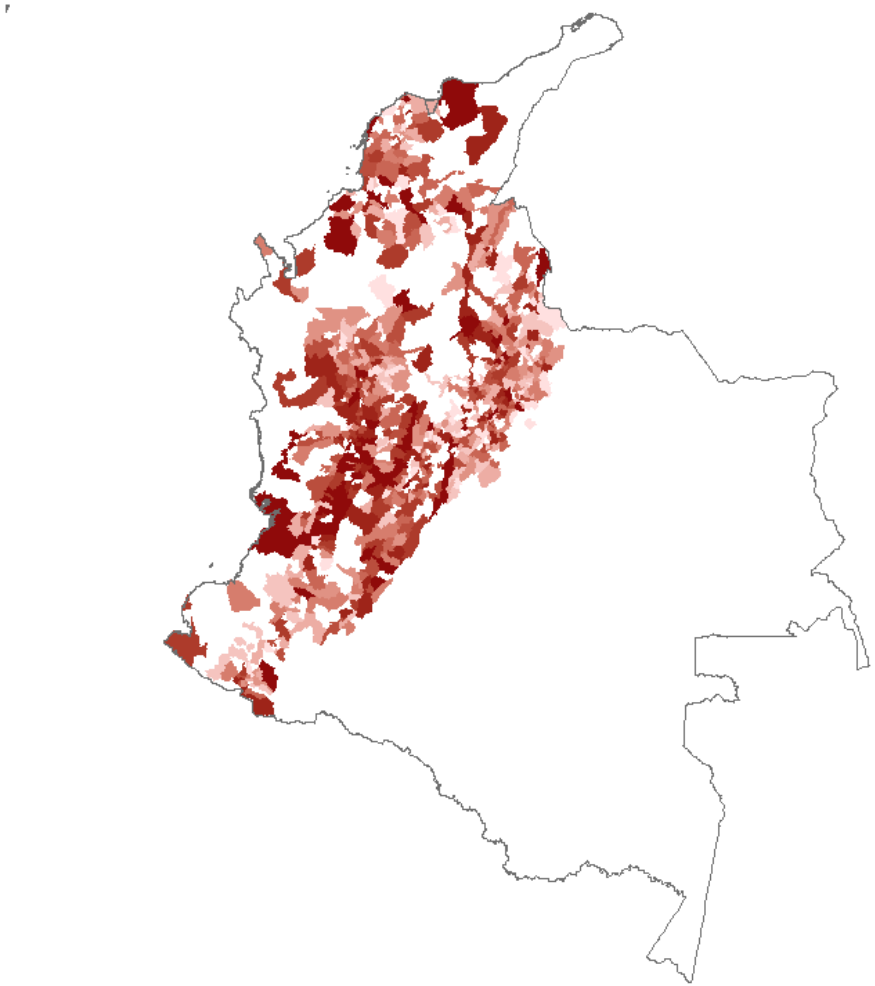
Note: For clarity, municipal boundaries are not shown. Dark areas depict municipalities that experienced insurgency during the armed phase of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917). Municipalities that did not exist or have missing values appear in white. Data were hand-coded using a vast range of secondary sources. See footnote 58 and text for details.

Figure 2.9. Average vote share for the Conservative Party in Colombian municipalities, 1930 and 1946 presidential elections



Note: Data were grouped in quintiles to color the map and come from (Oquist 1973). Darker areas represent municipalities with higher average support for the Conservative Party. The large area in white contained less than 5% of the population and was not subdivided in municipalities, so data are not available. Other municipalities that were created after 1946 also appear in white.

Figure 2.10. Fiscal capacity in Colombia. Per capita income tax revenues in 1950



Note: Data were grouped in deciles to color the map. Darker areas represent municipalities with higher per capita income tax revenues in 1950. The large area in white contained less than 5% of the population and was not subdivided in municipalities, so data are not available. Other municipalities that were created after 1946 or have missing values also appear in white. Data were coded from sources collected during archival research. See text for details.

3 SHARING THE MEANS OF VIOLENCE: LOCAL MILITIAS AND THE RULE OF LAW IN MEXICO

Abstract

This chapter advances two main arguments: first, it suggests that deep-seated cleavages push emerging national states to relinquish a strict monopoly of violence at the local level. Second, while local armed groups may effectively assist the state in countering societal resistance and maintaining local order, collaboration between the national state and local militias inhibits the development of security and justice institutions in the long run. I provide empirical support for both arguments using original, hand-collected data on over 1,700 state-sanctioned rural militia forces in postrevolutionary Mexico, drawn from archival sources. I show that the cleavages that dominated politics during the era of state formation—associated with anticlericalism and agrarian reform—shaped the distribution of rural defense forces across Mexico's territory. In turn, areas with a higher concentration of rural militias in the past today have weaker law enforcement and justice institutions, higher homicide rates, and are more likely to have vigilante organizations. These associations are not driven by prior levels of state capacity, geographic conditions, socioeconomic factors, or other potential confounders. The findings shed light on the historical origins of state institutional weakness and advance our understanding of a crucial aspect of political development—the concentration of physical force in formal apparatuses with control over territory and clearly differentiated from society.

3.1 Introduction

The organization and use of physical violence in a given territory is the essence of the modern state (M. Weber 1978). State coercion plays a crucial role in the deterrence of private violence and the provision of order and protection—the foremost justifications for political rule. The development of institutions capable of exerting coercion across territory is therefore at the core of any process of state formation and accumulation of state capacity.

This chapter examines internal cleavages and the uneven development of coercive institutions across postrevolutionary Mexico, and relates this history to contemporary variation in the capacity of the state to provide routinized order and uphold the rule of law within its borders. My examination of the development of the state's coercive apparatus centers on an under-studied but important topic: the rural militia units that were incorporated into the army in the early stages of state formation, and remained common instruments of central state power in localities across Mexico for much of the twentieth century. I argue that by focusing on their origins, functions, and long-run effects, we can gain insight into the formation and capacities of the state's law and order institutions more generally.

The analysis proceeds in two main steps. I first argue that the cleavages that structured politics during the formative years of the state following the Revolution (1910-1917) shaped postrevolutionary governments' responses to the twin challenges of concentrating the means of violence and institutionalizing coercion. Specifically, the religious cleavage that spawned a major Catholic rebellion in the late 1920s, along with redistributive socioeconomic conflict associated with the state's project of agrarian reform, pushed state elites to delegate coercive capacity to semi-legal armed groups, in order to maintain local control in vast areas of the country.

Using a new, hand-collected, geo-coded dataset constructed from archival sources and covering the crucial period of institutionalization of the armed forces after the Revolution, I show that these historical fault lines mapped onto the presence and activity of state-sanctioned rural militias across territory. Where opposition to the anticlerical and land reform projects of the state-building coalition was historically stronger, the central state made use of locally-based armed groups—formally subordinated to the army but lying outside the state apparatus proper—to enforce domestic order and counter resistance. Consistent with my general theoretical argument that the structure of cleavages exerts a strong influence on processes of state formation and shapes spatial patterns of state capacity development, I find that the state was more likely to maintain rural militia units in municipalities that had joined the religious Cristero Rebellion (1926-1929), and in those where it implemented deeper agrarian redistribution. In short, the geography of state coercive capacity mirrored the country's cleavage geography.

The political underpinnings of the state-building project—as Mann put it, "who this Leviathan is: Who controls it? Who is doing what to whom?" (Mann 2012, 359)—had profound implications for the institutional organization of physical violence. The type and intensity of coercive power deployed by the state over its territory followed the fault lines between the state-building coalition, commanded by anticlerical modernizers in strategic alliance with mobilized lower-class groups, and the politically excluded sectors of society that resisted the new state, including lay Catholics, the institutional Church, landowners, conservative sectors of the middle class, and displaced local elites.

I then examine the effects of the postrevolutionary state's reliance on local armed groups formally commanded by the army on the Mexican government's ability to provide law and order through formal and ordinary means. I argue that this form of building and exercising coercive

power stunted the development of civilian law enforcement apparatuses, along with other regular tools and mechanisms to manage social conflict and maintain local order. Put differently, it curtailed the institutional resources at the disposal of local governments—legally responsible for public security—in the long run. I find a robust negative correlation between the presence of rural militias historically and various current measures of capacity to uphold the rule of law down to the municipality level, including the strength of civilian law enforcement agencies, the supply of *jueces cívicos* (roughly, justices of the peace), the homicide rate, and the emergence of self-defense forces and community policing groups.

Taken together, these two findings establish a fine-grained empirical connection between historical experience and the contemporary fragilities of the Mexican state in maintaining peace and protecting citizens. The findings support the argument that the cleavage structures of the era of state formation conditioned the postrevolutionary state's strategies with respect to the organization of physical force across the territory; in doing so, they shaped the development of law and order institutions, with serious consequences for the long-run ability of local governments to provide public order through regular institutional structures. Especially in some parts of the territory, then, Mexican democracy has inherited feeble institutional foundations for the rule of law. This institutional context has incubated high levels of criminal violence and serves as an enabling condition for the vicious cycles of ineffective state authority and criminal state capture observed today.

To my knowledge, this is also the first systematic municipal-level analysis of the historical factors behind the structural weakness of local civil police forces in Mexico. This weakness is widely recognized to be one of the root causes of the state's poor record in the provision of security and the heavy dependence on military intervention for internal order, with

its severe consequences on human rights, state-society relations, and social life more generally. More than 40,000 soldiers deployed across the country to enforce legality and perform policing duties over the past decade make understanding the (mal)formation of the state apparatus an important task.

The chapter makes three additional contributions. First, it provides a historically grounded and contextualized explanation for the emergence and persistence of "brown areas," spaces where the state exerts little infrastructural power and formal rights and rules lack substance. O'Donnell linked this deficit of institutional capacity in parts of a country's territory to several social and political pathologies, including weak democratic citizenship, exceptional despotic interventions by public authorities, and highly arbitrary forms of private domination (1993, 2004).

In this sense, the formation of states lacking the institutional means to regularly extend their legality over territory is an important—and largely unresolved—puzzle in the study of political development. My theoretical argument traces the territorially uneven capacity of states to enforce law and order to historical state-building projects characterized by intense factionalism and, relatedly, to the deep-seated political divisions that often underlay the rise of states in Latin America and beyond. Such cleavages affected the popular legitimacy of the state and receptiveness to its authority across space during state formation, spawning uneven trajectories of institutional development and accumulation of infrastructural power. Although the empirical evidence in this chapter concerns a specific country, these theoretical ideas and the analysis of the political mechanisms affecting the process of reorganization of violence during state formation are broadly relevant to our understanding of the determinants of institutional capacity in the primary dimension of the state.

Secondly, the chapter informs the vast literature on civil conflict. The spatial reach and coherence of state institutions, particularly security forces, are associated with the emergence and success of insurgency and revolutionary movements (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Goodwin 2001; Skocpol 1979). My analysis helps elucidate the conditions leading to the varying degrees of stateness across territory that scholars have linked to these outcomes. In this sense, it links empirical studies of subnational conflict to the mature literature on the historical foundations of the modern state.

Thirdly, this chapter offers new empirical evidence on the role of civil militias or paramilitaries in civil war and post-conflict settings (Staniland 2015), and advances our understanding of their implications for state-building and long-term governance. The reliance on popular militias to police the countryside, assist in military operations, and buttress state power in the face of societal resistance has been a staple feature of many ideologically-committed revolutionary regimes (Perry 2006). Yet in part due to data limitations, rigorous analysis of the origins, endurance, and effects of these armed actors remains rare. The dataset presented in this chapter, constructed on the basis of over 1,700 archival records, allows for systematic investigation into these questions. More generally, it serves as a rich empirical basis to elucidate the conditions under which central states cooperate with irregular armed groups instead of establishing a full Weberian monopoly over the use of violence, a foundational question of political development (Acemoglu, Robinson, and Santos 2013).

The rest is organized as follows. Section 3.2 provides an overview of the history of rural militias in postrevolutionary state-building and outlines their connections to the Church-state conflict and agrarian reform. Section 3.3 discusses my original data on these armed forces. Section 3.4 presents municipal-level evidence that the incidence of militia activity indeed

reflected the geographies of the Cristero War and the state's project of land redistribution. Section 3.5 turns this distribution of coercive capacity during the formative period of the state into an explanatory factor; it documents a negative relationship between the historical role of the militias and various contemporary measures of the capacity of civil institutions to provide routinized law and order. Section 3.6 concludes.

3.2 Irregular Armed Forces And Postrevolutionary State-Building

In the decades that followed the armed phase of the Revolution (1910-1917), Mexico underwent a profound process of reorganization and concentration of coercion typical of state formation (Bates, Greif, and Singh 2002; Tilly 1992). The form and reach of this process, however, were deeply conditioned by the sharp cleavages that characterized postrevolutionary politics, most prominently those pitting political Catholics against anticlerical revolutionaries, and mobilized peasants against opponents of agrarian redistribution.

These social fractures shaped the reorganization of armed force, leaving a strong imprint on the state's coercive apparatus and its relation with armed groups in society. A vast network of rural civil militias, increasingly subordinated to the army without being fully assimilated into regular forces, survived as a valuable resource for the national government to enforce local order and exercise coercive power. This particular development would exert an important influence on subsequent outcomes.

3.2.1 Rural Militias from the Mexican Revolution to the Present

Private violence remained widespread in the aftermath of the Revolution, with fluid boundaries between irregular groups and state forces.[71] The collapse of the central state had left a multiplicity of armed groups of various sizes and political leanings operating throughout the territory. In villages and communities, elites and ordinary citizens had mounted self-defense organizations to confront pervasive banditry and civil war violence (Guerra Manzo 2002, 33; Plasencia 2010, 261). A tradition of local organizing existed at least since the 19th century due to the constant breakdown of order before Diaz's dictatorship, now reinforced by a decade of popular rebellion.[72] These local vigilante groups—frequently referred to as *defensas sociales*[73]—participated in pacification campaigns, performed policing functions, and served as a springboard for local political office.

Moreover, recalcitrant state governors and local bosses drew on armed groups to maintain regional protection rackets and reproduce their base of support.[74] Peasant militias formed by *agraristas* (land grant petitioners and recipients), many of which had roots in the popular rebellions of the revolutionary period, defended their lands and pressured for agrarian reform, sometimes in alliance with radical state governors. Landlords organized paramilitary

[71] The discussion on local armed groups in these paragraphs draws on secondary sources and my own archival research. Relevant works include Arellano Cruz (1950); Hernández Chávez (2012); Meyer (1976); Plasencia (2010); Rath (2013); Rocha (1988). Relevant archival materials include: Reportes de desarme de defensas sociales, Archivo General de la Nación (hereafter AGN), Obregón-Calles, 818/A/114; Circulares defensas civiles, AGN, Obregón-Calles, 104-D-9; Estudio relacionado con el funcionamiento de las Defensas Rurales, AGN, Ávila Camacho, 550/24.
[72] Irregular forces and militias proliferated since Independence under the influence of classic republican ideas about local self-governance and citizen armed service, and given the incapacity of the central state to maintain regular troops throughout the territory (Guardino 1996, 88).
[73] Local armed groups received different names across time and space, but they are most commonly referred to as *defensas sociales*, *defensas civiles*, *acordadas*, *cuerpos auxiliares*, and *defensas rurales* in archival materials and the historical literature. The sheer variety of terms is a testament to the dispersed control over coercion in this period. Formal designations emerge once local armed groups were incorporated into the army, as explained below.
[74] Under the new Constitution of 1917, Congress could authorize state governors to organize troops in their states. Several governors formed security forces to combat remaining rebel groups and consolidate power, often with little respect for the numbers authorized by the Congress (Plasencia 2010, 261–73).

groups known as *guardias blancas* to resist, which often operated in collusion with conservative military officers and other state officials.[75] Meanwhile, central elites struggled to control and downsize a large and undisciplined army commanded by semi-autonomous generals.

In this context, national governments implemented measures throughout the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s to regain control over coercion and institutionalize the new army (Lieuwen 1968). By the mid-twentieth century, a more disciplined and professionalized military exercised firmer vertical control over physical force, under a corporate authoritarian state led by civilians.[76] Crucially, however, civil defense forces would maintain a role in this structure, attached to the state's central apparatus of coercion.

We can roughly distinguish two main periods in the history of irregular armed groups in the postrevolutionary era. In the early years, such forces were largely under the orbit of strongman governors and local bosses, whose control over coercion allowed them to hold off the central government.[77] Naturally, national elites and the military hierarchy viewed the fragmented control over armed groups with distrust and, when circumstanced permitted, made selective attempts to eliminate militia units (Plasencia 2010, 271).[78]

[75] Self-defense groups under the terms *defensas sociales* and *defensas civiles* were often sponsored by landowners. Carta dirigida por el General Jesús Ferreira al Presidente de la República, April 27, 1921, AGN, Obregón-Calles, 104/D/10. See also (Rath 2013, 36).

[76] Increased discipline does not mean the political and military spheres became fully differentiated. Large scale barracks uprisings ceased and civilians controlled the executive, but the military continued to play a crucial and until recently underemphasized role in maintaining social order and authoritarian stability, as revisionist studies have argued (Fallaw and Rugeley 2012).

[77] Governors Francisco Múgica of Michoacán (Boyer 2003), Adalberto Tejeda of Veracruz (Fowler-Salamini 1978), and Saturnino Cedillo of San Luis Potosí (Ankerson 1984) are the most prominent examples.

[78] Skepticism of irregular forces ran deep among the military. In the early 1920s, they recognized that these groups had collaborated with regular troops and described them as a "necessary evil," whose existence responded to "the impossibility on the part of legal authorities to provide protection to individual and general interests." However, the military hierarchy warned the president that "their attacks, abuses, and disorders" were numerous, and the country "could find itself with two armies: one within Right, disciplined, organized, with well-defined responsibilities...the other, a numerous collection of armed men, without clear attributions or faculties, uncoordinated, and uncontrolled by responsible authorities." Oficio de la Secretaría de Guerra y Marina para el C. Presidente de la República, AGN, Obregón-Calles, 104/D/9.

Yet these efforts were undermined by central governments' own reliance on popular militias when major armed challenges threatened to derail the process of state consolidation. In 1923, a member of the governing coalition defected and led a barracks uprising involving a third of army generals and at least half of the troops. Another military revolt in 1929 garnered the support of a third of the army. Most importantly, between 1926 and 1929 the revolutionary army found itself fighting a powerful Catholic insurgency throughout the West during the Cristero War, which caused some 45,000 deaths within its ranks (J. Meyer 1995, 260–66). Continuing opposition to the core of the revolutionary project—state anticlericalism, land redistribution, and federal education[79]—also generated the *Segunda*, a second and much weaker wave of Catholic guerrilla warfare that peaked in 1935.

In each of these conflicts, local militias operating alongside the central security apparatus played a decisive role. As a situational response, national leaders forged agreements with regional warlords to mobilize existing irregular forces in defense of the revolutionary regime. Offering agrarian reform in return, they actively supported the arming of the peasantry. In addition to land, pro-government combatants also received budgetary side-payments and a blind eye to their numerous abuses. Although limited by the fragmentary nature of the evidence, historians agree that the participation of *agraristas* and paramilitary forces more generally weighed heavily on conflict outcomes, allowing the regime to prevail over its challengers (Wasserman 1993).

Under the influence of these historical experiences, central elites recognized both the impossibility of dispensing with the militias and their potential contribution to the construction of political order, especially where societal opposition ran deeper. National governments thus

[79] I join Fallaw and others in considering these three as the distinctive components of the postrevolutionary state's project, as opposed to governance objectives pursued by states in general (Fallaw 2013, 4).

settled upon a strategy of linking militia units directly with the central apparatus of rule, instead of pursuing their elimination. The selective disarmament of specific irregular forces continued out of political expediency, but the thrust of state policy was directed to bringing them under tighter central control. At the same time, however, they were to remain socially-embedded and distinct from regular state security forces—in short, an extensive network of armed actors in society reinforcing the coercive capacity of the central state from below.

Such strategy of subordinating local armed groups to the national coercive apparatus, without full assimilation,[80] opened a second phase in the history of irregular forces, one in which they increasingly became part of the institutional arsenal of the central state while retaining roots in local society. The reorganization of militia violence constituted one of the centerpieces of the broader process of concentration of authority that unfolded in the two decades after the Revolution; yet its dynamics and spatial patterns were strongly shaped by the main cleavages of the time.

The first steps to attach the militias directly to the central state took place in 1929, in the wake of the Cristero War. According to the classic work on the conflict, some 25,000 militia members served as auxiliary troops to the Federal army, who "made use of them but despised them." The *agraristas* "were not, perhaps, very good soldiers," and "they took advantage of the situation to settle private feuds." Undisciplined and underprepared for combat, they were used as cannon fodder. However, they were a vital source of information to engage in counter-guerrilla warfare, given their superior knowledge of local terrain and society: "Although they lacked enthusiasm, they were considered as formidable enemies by the Cristeros, because like them they

[80] In a recent article, Staniland distinguishes between four strategies that states can pursue toward militias: suppression, containment, collusion, and incorporation (Staniland 2015). The Mexican state adopted different strategies across time and space during the early period of postrevolutionary state formation, ultimately settling upon a mix of collusion and incorporation.

were peasants and knew the country and its inhabitants…they were the best placed to exercise surveillance" (J. Meyer 1976).

As the civil war came to an end, new regulations formalized the peasant militia units and their ties to the national state. Now sanctioned by the central state, the *defensas rurales* were recognized as "factors of order" that would act as "the vanguard of the legion that will defend revolutionary postulates...making public tranquility prevail in the country." These unsalaried forces were to be recruited among the local peasantry and collaborate with civilian authorities in routine policing and the protection of their communities; however, they would be under direct command of military officials in the region, receive military instruction, and assist the army as local "guides" and "explorers," providing them with intelligence about local conditions and threats to public order. The national government also reserved the right to disarm the militias when their cooperation was no longer believed to be necessary (Secretaría de Guerra y Marina 1929).

Important sectors of the army, fearing that the dispersed control over the means of violence could backfire, remained reluctant about the militias throughout the 1930s. Policing and public safety were formal and exclusive responsibilities of municipal governments, which called into question the legality of rural defense units. Moreover, abuses were widespread, the *defensas* often proved to be unreliable allies,[81] and their actual numbers were uncertain. Army generals in 1936 feared that irregulars outnumbered regular soldiers (Piñeyro 1985, 54). According to archival records from the American military, this was indeed this case. These records indicate

[81] See, for example, (Fallaw 2013, 172).

that members of civil defense forces approximated 69,000 at the time, compared to around 58,000 regular soldiers (Plasencia 2010, 280).[82]

These numbers, however, were in large part a product of the state's own efforts and proceedings. Indeed, President Lázaro Cárdenas's administration (1934-1940) actively engaged in rural militia-building as a means to support its ambitious program of agrarian reform, counterbalance conservative elements inside the army, and more generally assert the institutional and ideological supremacy of the state over priest and landlord. During this most radical phase, Cardenistas attempted to assign the coercive institutions of the state—including the civil defense forces—a decisive role in the cultural and socioeconomic transformation of society (Rath 2012).[83] New regulations were issued mandating members of the peasant militias to be *ejidatarios* (communal land reform beneficiaries) who "identified with revolutionary principles." Along with land and socialist education, peasants would receive rifles and military training to protect their *ejidos* and, when needed, engage in service to the state.

In this sense, the *defensas rurales* were to become key sites for the construction of revolutionary citizenship and the interlocking of state and society. This aspect of Cárdenas's project has parallels to those of later revolutionary movements led by Leninist vanguard parties (Perry 2006), which organized militias with the objective of raising revolutionary conscience and thoroughly mobilizing society, while simultaneously controlling it at the grassroots. Ultimately, as happened in other areas of state policy, the radical ambitions of Cardenismo concerning the *defensas* were hobbled by fiscal weakness, significant societal opposition, and lack of

[82] Hernández Chávez reports 81,656 rural militia members in 1937 and 53,200 in 1938 (2012).
[83] For a study on the state's efforts to "remake human beings" during Cardenismo and the grassroots resistance they generated, see Becker (1995). Cardenista state agents frequently misinterpreted peasant views, demands, and traditions, reducing genuine forms of popular conservatism to crude class-based interpretations of false consciousness.

collaboration from more conservative interests within the state apparatus itself.[84] Militias nevertheless multiplied under Cárdenas and would continue to play a role long after his presidency, if not the radical one that Cardenistas desired.

The central state's embrace of irregular rural armed forces came with further measures to cement the military's control over them. Rural militias were more formally organized as a reserve army into infantry battalions and cavalry regiments in each military zone, and a central office was established within the Secretariat of War to organize and oversee them. At the same time, the agrarian reservists, direct beneficiaries of Cardenismo's impulse to land reform, served as a counterweight to opposing factions in the military hierarchy and the regular army (Hernández Chávez 2012; Lieuwen 1968, 122–23).

The trend of incorporating unsalaried rural militias into the national state's instruments of coercive power consolidated with the authoritarian regime itself. The radical social and ideological meanings attached to peasant armed groups were abandoned as the regime veered rightward starting in the 1940s, but their use as semiofficial agents of surveillance and repression in the countryside was not. Governments kept them as an appendage to the central state machinery to help maintain rural order.[85] The militias remained constantly implicated in rural violence, now with an increasingly conservative role. Their lax discipline, poor reliability, and excesses notwithstanding, they had emerged from the deep conflicts of the postrevolutionary

[84] On the failures of the Cardenista project for the militias, see Rath (2013). Efforts to impose strict criteria for membership in the militia units proved unsuccessful; high-ranking officials, skeptic of the militias and sometimes allied with conservative regional elites, dragged their feet; and the *defensas* often served as a cover for paramilitary groups that repressed peasants on behalf of landed interests.

[85] A 1944 internal report on the operation of rural defense forces explained that their main functions were rural policing, especially in remote regions, and "collecting information about anything that could alter public order." The report admitted that the militias' performance was mediocre and that they often acted as instruments of local bosses, but since they were formed by volunteers they also made fiscal obligations less burdensome. Comandancia del 8° Cuerpo de Infantería al C. Secretario de la Defensa Nacional, AGN, Ávila Camacho, 550/24.

period as a low-cost and far-reaching system of intelligence and local policing that a fiscally-strapped authoritarian state could not do away with.

Although the available evidence is quite limited and histories covering more recent decades remain to be written, the relative weight of rural defense forces in the state's coercive apparatus and in rural police work seems to have waned in more recent decades, a trend likely aided by urbanization. Nevertheless, it is known that some 38,000 members existed by 1970 and that they collaborated with the army both in the repression of dissident popular movements in the 1950s, and the "dirty war" counterinsurgency campaigns against rural guerrilla movements of the 60s and 70s (Piñeyro 1985, 83–108; Sierra Guzmán 2003).[86]

Gradually, by selectively dissolving defense units and tightening its control over the distribution of weapons, the military more clearly reduced the *defensas* to a secondary role as local guides and informants in strategic locations. Their numbers were down to 12,000 in the mid-2000s (about one-quarter the current size of the Federal Police), and they were present in two thirds of all states.[87] A central department within the Secretariat of Defense remains in charge of rural militia forces to this day, but as before, they are not formal, salaried state employees. When local order collapsed in the central-western state of Michoacán in 2013 in the context of the drug war, with a wave of heavily-armed *autodefensa* (self-defense) organizations sweeping the state (Phillips 2016), the national government colluded with the *autodefensas* for intelligence purposes. Resurrecting the strategies of old, it also reached an agreement to incorporate them into the *defensas rurales*.[88]

[86] An example of militia collaboration in counterinsurgency can be found in AGN, SEDENA-Estado Mayor, caja 208, exp. 846.
[87] "Paramilitares en México: Cuerpos de Defensas Rurales, de SEDENA," *Proceso*, December 30, 2005, http://www.proceso.com.mx/230941/paramilitares-en-mexico-cuerpos-de-defensas-rurales-de-sedena
[88] "Acuerdo para el Apoyo Federal a la Seguridad en Michoacán." http://www.gob.mx/segob/prensa/firman-los-gobiernos-de-la-republica-y-de-michoacan-y-grupos-ciudadanos-acuerdo-para-integrarse-a-la-vida-institucional

3.2.2 Cleavages, State Legitimacy, And The Organization Of Violence

As the above discussion illustrates, the reorganization of armed force and its accumulation in central apparatuses—the crux of processes of state formation—revolved around the deep cleavages that split society in the aftermath of the Revolution. Control over physical force was reorganized in a context of sharp sociopolitical divisions over the influence of Catholicism and the distribution of agrarian property, which I argue profoundly shaped both coercive power across territory and its institutional forms. The location of armed force, spatially and socially, was a function of the religious and agrarian questions.[89]

In this sense, the characteristics and divisions of the social realm were built into the very structure of the state's system of coercion. Institutional reconstruction took place in a highly variegated economic and cultural landscape, and as a result the receptiveness to anticlerical and redistributive policies varied sharply across territory.[90] Such preexisting socioeconomic and cultural conditions were largely out of the control of state-builders in the early period of state formation, yet they greatly conditioned their ability to legitimize and reproduce state rule. This uneven record at inducing societal compliance influenced the ways that coercion was organized, outsourced, and distributed across physical and social space. Compelled by the intense societal resistance against core elements of their project in this decisive historical period, state elites complemented the capabilities of the formal government apparatus with a network of coercive actors that straddled the boundary between state and society.

[89] These cleavages overlapped to some extent, leading to the formation of conservative coalitions formed by political Catholics and landed interests. Yet Catholic resistance to state anticlericalism had a genuine popular, grassroots component that cut right across the class-based divide (Knight 1994b; J. Meyer 1994).

[90] The economic and cultural profile of regions and localities was itself shaped by historical experience. The strength of the Catholic Church, which responded to colonization patterns and geographical variations in the Church's efforts to regain social influence during the Porfirian dictatorship, ranks as the most important determinant of the sociocultural characteristics of communities (Fallaw 2013, 31–32; Knight 1994a).

This form of organizing violence persisted for the rest of the century, even after the political divides that spawned it lost intensity. As a semi-formal, state-sanctioned coercive institution with deep social origins, the rural militia became part of the arrangement the state relied upon to maintain order and regulate social relations. Indeed, this network of coercion-wielding agents, situated between the social and the formal-institutional realms, played an important role in the production of local order in much of the country. Abstracting from the specific case of Mexico, the relevant theoretical point is that the cleavage structures prevalent during decisive periods of state formation may exert a strong influence on two key political processes: the political reorganization of physical force and, by that means, the development of formal-institutional state capacity in the long run.

3.3 A New Spatial Dataset On Rural Defense Forces

The irregular qualities of rural militia units have hindered historical and empirical work on the topic. Even concerning formal institutions, the "cognitive" capacity of the Mexican state was generally limited in matters of law and order: basic policing statistics were not computed, and historical crime statistics are unreliable. Accurate and sufficiently disaggregated indicators on the *defensas rurales* from secondary sources do not exist.[91] In fact, historical studies tend to mention them only in passing. A few excellent, qualitative studies have recently documented the regular army's permanent role in internal order and mentioned the widespread reliance on irregular forces; however, developing systematic measures on militia units from these studies is

[91] Hernández Chávez (2012) and Plasencia (2010) report official data on rural defense forces obtained from US military archives, but only at the state level and for one or two years in the 1930s.

not possible.[92] Their focus is predominantly regional, and their inferences have been limited by the fragmentary nature of the available archival materials.

As for primary sources, these forces should have left a more consistent paper trail once they were attached to the army, but in practice data on their composition, distribution, and activities remains scattered and elusive. Access to military archives was tightly controlled during Mexico's authoritarian regime, and even today remains limited. As a result, the militias and their role in postrevolutionary order are a seriously under-studied topic.

In order to build a comprehensive national picture of rural defense forces, I manually put together a new, village-level spatial database on the location of these units for the period 1932-1946, using all relevant existing records in the presidential archives of the *Archivo General de la Nación* (AGN). The 1932-1946 period covers the administrations of presidents Abelardo Rodríguez, Lázaro Cárdenas, and Manuel Ávila Camacho. It is considered as a decisive period of institutionalization of the postrevolutionary state, after the defeat, with the collaboration of irregular forces, of the major rebellions of the 1920s. For reference, the dominant authoritarian party was founded in 1929 (the same year the *defensas rurales* were subordinated to the army), renamed in 1938 with the corporatist incorporation of popular sectors, and finally transformed into the modern PRI in 1946.

The presidential archives are the core collection of documents at the National Archive. They contain the universe of documents received and produced by the president's office, including all types of reports, memorandums, petitions, and communications with officials and bureaus in the entire state apparatus, as well as with civil society organizations and ordinary citizens. Each archival record is associated with a physical index card, which contains the

[92] See especially Rath (2013) and the essays in Pansters (2012) and Fallaw and Rugeley (2012) . These studies also shed new light on the real extent of rural violence in postrevolutionary Mexico.

relevant reference number, date, basic identifying information of the person or institution associated with the record, state and locality if available, and sometimes a brief description of the documents it contains.

To construct the dataset, for each of the three presidential archives I hand-coded the information provided in all index cards under *defensas sociales* or *defensas rurales*, the terms used to classify documents concerning irregular forces. While these records address a variety of issues related to the *defensas*, a great many are complaints for their multiple abuses—including thefts, murders, unjustified detentions, harassment, and the like. Other types include petitions of armament or government support, notifications about the formation of a *defensa*, reports about their role in agrarian conflicts or combating banditry, and petitions by local officials or citizens to disarm the local militia.

Regardless of the specific content of the underlying record, however, the information available from the index card points to the existence of a rural defense unit in a given locality. This constitutes the essential piece of information I draw upon in the empirical sections below. By covering a relatively long period of time of three presidential administrations, I am able to generate an accurate map of the distribution of these forces in the territory in the formative years of the Mexican state.

In total, I recorded the information of 2,151 index cards, which correspond to an equal number of archival records. Of these, 49 correspond to records containing documents generally related to the militias, but without reference to a specific location. The remaining 2,102 concern a rural defense unit in a given town or locality. To illustrate, the following is an example of the data I recorded from an index card:

10/16/1933. Hidalgo [state]. Gandhó [locality]. Complaint against the Defensa. Residents complain that the Chiefs of the Defensa Social are the supreme authorities, since they are the ones who decide who is to be punished and how. They cite concrete cases and ask for the Defensa's replacement.[93]

I then used INEGI's geostatistical database of Mexico, which details the localities existing at the time of each census starting in 1900, and assigns them a unique code that is associated to spatial information, to identify each locality in my dataset of rural defense forces. This exercise was conducted manually, on a one-by-one basis. Ultimately, I was able to match 1,711 entries to INEGI's directory of Mexican localities, or 81.4% of the total. In the remaining cases, two or more homonymous localities existed in the state to which the locality in the card belonged to, and no other information was available to discriminate between them; therefore, it was impossible to determine the relevant geostatistical code.

Based on the available information, however, this loss of observations is not a major concern. No evidence suggests that localities that could not be identified are systematically different from those in the final sample in any respect, other than the fact that they happen to have more common or repeated names. As could be expected, the distribution of militia units across Mexican states is almost identical for observations in and out of the sample. In other words, observation loss is relatively minor (391 out of 2,102 cases) and in all likelihood random. To the best of my knowledge, then, it is not a source of bias in the statistical tests conducted below, nor does it result in an inaccurate picture of rural defense units.

[93] The translation is mine. Index cards for the presidential administration of Abelardo Rodríguez (1932-1934) provide more detailed description of the associated archival records than Cárdenas' (1934-1940) or Ávila Camacho's (1940-1946). In all cases, however, basic geographic information is provided. The original entry in the example reads: "Queja en su contra. Se quejan de que los Jefes de las Defensas Sociales son las Autoridades Supremas, pues son ellos los que dicen a quiénes y cómo debe castigarse. Citan casos concretos. Piden su cambio."

As in any study based on archival sources, the possibility remains that militias were active in some localities but left no paper trace in the presidential archives. This would be problematic if militias for which records do not exist were systematically different from those that did leave a paper trace. The variety in the type of documents concerning the militias found in the AGN, and the construction of the dataset on the basis of documents spanning a long period of fifteen years, partially allay this concern.

To further address the concern of potential selection bias, I accessed records of the American Military Intelligence Division, located in the National Archives of the United States, that list the 141 towns and cities that served as seats for militia battalions and regiments in Mexico in 1938.[94] By this time, each specific militia unit in a given locality was affiliated with a larger battalion or regiment. The information available from these records is considerably more aggregated than my locality-level data, but spans the universe of militia forces. The distribution of battalions and regiments across Mexican states according to this source resembles the one that emerges from my locality-level data, which provides further assurance that selection is not a major concern. While I cannot categorically affirm there are no selection issues, the approach followed here opens new empirical ground and is the most exhaustive possible way to comprehensively study this crucial topic.

The resulting dataset represents the most comprehensive and disaggregated source on the existence and territorial distribution of paramilitary forces in Mexico collected to date. Overall, the more than 1,700 entries in the dataset indicate that 843 municipalities (36% of the total at the time) had a rural defense unit operating in at least one of its localities between 1932 and 1946. In comparison, in 1952 the army had 650 squads of an average of 14 troops stationed throughout

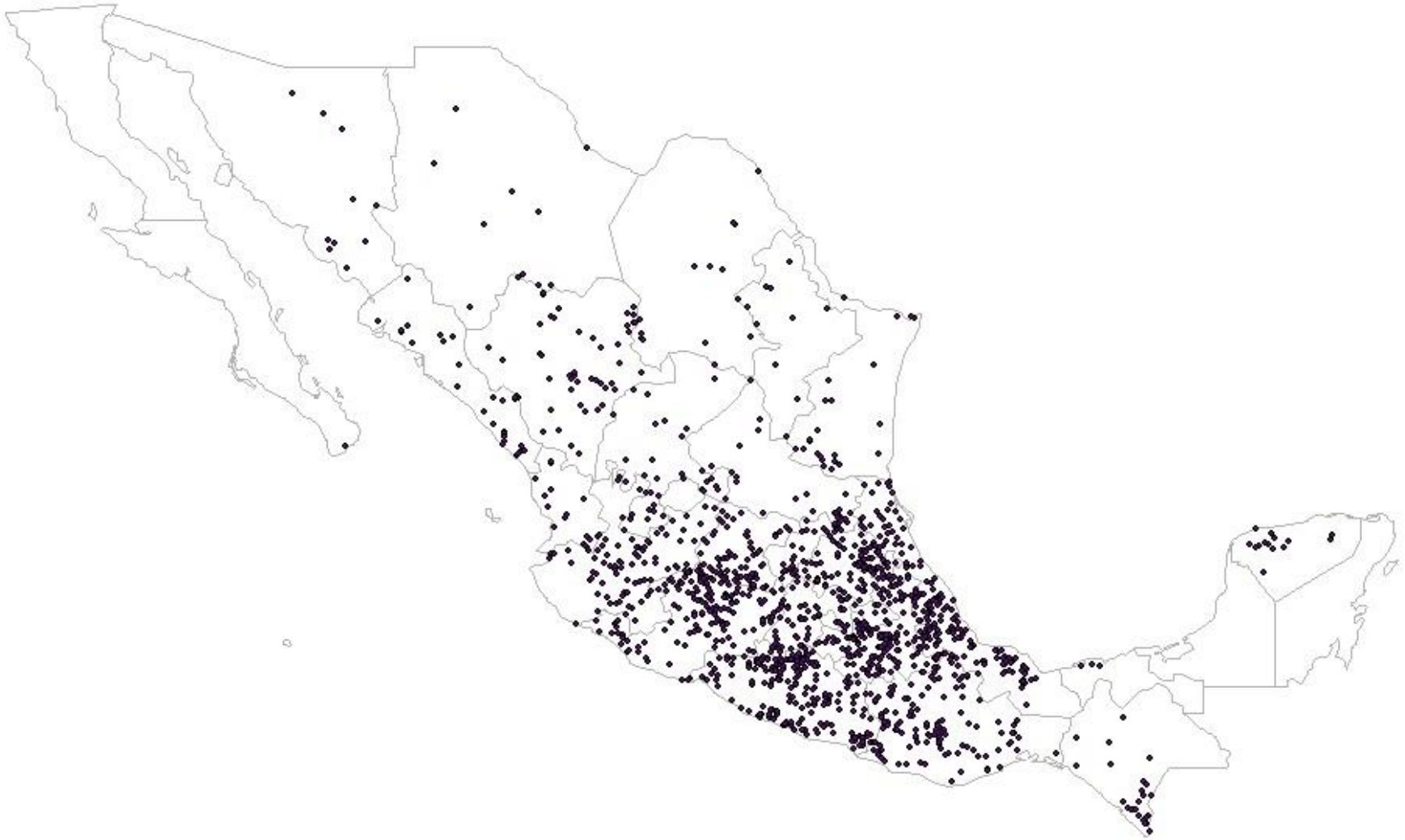
[94] Report No. 8679, October 7, 1938, "Quasi-Military Organizations. Reserves in various Military Zones." Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs (RG 165), Military Intelligence Division, Security Classified Correspondence and Reports, 1917-1941 (Entry A1-65), box 686, file number 2025-259/671.

the country "to perform functions proper of the police and cooperate with civilian authorities."[95] Assuming each squad was located in a different municipality, Rath estimates this corresponds to about one squad in every fifth municipality (2013, 117). A map depicting the exact location of rural militias appears below as Figure 3.1.

States like Michoacán, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Puebla, and Veracruz show a high concentration of militia presence. As a first approximation, these states correspond to former rebel strongholds during the religious Cristero War (the center-west) and areas of deep agrarian conflict, the two main cleavages dominating politics during state formation. In the next section, I subject this connection to systematic empirical testing.

[95] "Estadística de prestaciones sociales que el Ejército ha dado a otras dependencias oficiales y a elementos civiles del país, durante el año de 1952." February 28, 1953. AGN, Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, 550/24.

Figure 3.1. Rural defense militias in postrevolutionary Mexico, 1932-1946



Note: Each dot in the map represents a locality (population settlement) with a rural militia unit, according to archival records. See section 3.3 above for details.

3.4 Religious Conflict, Agrarian Reform, and the Persistence of Paramilitarism

3.4.1 Outcome variable

In order to probe the relationship between the two most contentious components of the state project—anticlericalism and agrarian reform—and the presence of rural defense forces, I estimate a series of regression models at the municipality level. I construct the dependent

variable as the total number of localities (villages, *ejidos*, or any type of settlement) within a given municipality in which a militia existed in the period 1932-1946, based on the dataset described above. This constitutes an accurate measure of the extent to which the Mexican state relied on irregular armed groups for social control across the country's municipalities. The results below are robust to specifying the dependent variable as a binary variable indicating whether a militia existed in the municipality or not. Descriptive statistics for all variables used throughout the present chapter appear in Table 3.4 in the Appendix.

3.4.2 Other Variables

Religious cleavage

As explained above, the religious cleavage that set apart political Catholics and anticlerical state elites manifested itself through violent insurgency during the Cristero War (1926-29). I therefore capture the spatial distribution of this underlying divide using a dummy variable that takes the value of one if violent events related to the conflict took place in the municipality, local residents took up arms against the government, or if they actively provided support to the rebels. Municipalities where no violent events occurred, citizens did not participate in the insurgency, or rebels did not assert control received the value of zero. As

explained in chapter 2, the data were hand-coded for each municipality using multiple secondary sources, starting with Meyer's pioneering work (1994, 1995) and complementing it with over a dozen regional and local studies that provide information not originally covered by Meyer. A list of consulted sources appears in the Bibliography. Overall, insurgent activity could be traced in approximately a quarter of all municipalities existing at the time. A map indicating the municipalities affected by insurgency based on this new dataset appeared in chapter 2 as Figure 2.3.

Agrarian reform

The second important dimension of contestation around the postrevolutionary state's project relates to the redistributive conflicts linked to agrarian reform, which I measure using official data on land allocations from the *Registro Agrario Nacional*.[96] As explained above, the protection of the agrarian rights acquired by communities became the official justification for the spread of militias, especially during Cárdenas's presidency (Arellano Cruz 1950). To capture the intensity of agrarian reform in the municipality, I use all land allocations between 1916—the first year agrarian reform was implemented—and 1946, the last year included in the dataset on militia units. The relevant indicator is the total number of citizens benefitted by land grant decisions during these three decades, as a percentage of the population living in the municipality at the end of the period (1946).[97]

[96] The data were obtained through freedom of information requests.
[97] To estimate the municipal population in 1946, I linearly interpolated data from the 1940 and 1950 censuses. Results are robust to using the percentage of municipalities' area surface allocated via agrarian reform as an indicator. I use the number of beneficiaries to avoid overestimating the scope of land reform, since my measure of total surface area corresponds to the contemporary period but some municipalities have been subdivided since the 1930s.

Insurgency in the Mexican Revolution

In addition to these key explanatory variables, I use a range of variables to address potential problems of selection or confounding. I include a binary indicator of whether the municipality experienced insurgent violence during the armed phase of the Revolution between 1910 and 1917. As detailed in chapter 2, I hand-coded this variable for 2,176 municipalities relying on the vast historiography on the topic, in order to extend Dell's dataset of 217 municipalities and cover the entire country (2012).[98] Introducing this control into the model is important because scholars have argued that agrarian reform responded to patterns of revolutionary insurgency, and the latter is also likely associated with the probability of observing citizen militias later on. Controlling for revolutionary violence is also important to disentangle the potential effects of religious resistance during the Cristero War from those of prior episodes of violent conflict.

Preexisting state capacity

Another important concern is that spatial patterns of religious mobilization and agrarian reform, on the one hand, and the devolution of coercive capacity to rural defense militias, on the other, are all reflective of antecedent levels of state capacity that were rooted in the historical development of the state up to the twentieth century. Several important works on Latin American state-building focus on the nineteenth century to explain long-term patterns of state strength (Soifer 2015). To control for the possibility that deeper institutional conditions correlate with the explanatory factors and themselves shaped the postrevolutionary organization of coercion, I include the total number of state officials per 1,000 people in each municipality in 1900,

[98] Information could not be traced for approximately 200 municipalities. See footnote 58 in chapter 2.

obtained from the census. Results are robust to using the total number of police per 1,000 people in 1900 as an alternative measure of state penetration across municipalities, specific to the coercive apparatus.[99]

Geography and remoteness

I also include a group of exogenous geographic variables that capture important features of municipalities. Several scholars argue that a difficult geography creates friction for state projects (Herbst 2000; Scott 2009). Conflict studies also link geographic conditions to the effective reach of the state, and specifically of its regular security forces (Fearon and Laitin 2003). I use three different variables to comprehensively account for the potential influence of geography on both explanatory factors and the incidence of militia activity. The first is a measure of the roughness of terrain, which I calculate as the standard deviation of the altitude of all localities existing in the municipality according to the 2010 census. This measure precisely captures the difficulty posed by the terrain within each municipality and also other relevant characteristics of the land, like suitability for agriculture.

In addition, I include two measures of remoteness that could potentially influence patterns of religious insurgency and agrarian reform, as well as the state's reliance on rural defense forces for local order. Distance from the centers of power has been shown to affect state development in other contexts (Herbst 2000). Using latitude and longitude data, I calculated the geodesic distance ("as the crow flies") between the town serving as seat of government in each municipality and Mexico City in kilometers. The other measure is the geodesic distance between the seat of municipal government and the state capital.

[99] I use the number of bureaucrats because this variable has fewer missing values in the 1900 census.

Socioeconomic factors and state-specific characteristics

To further control for possibly confounding factors, extended model specifications include the percentage of the population living in rural areas in the municipality, the percentage employed in industry and commerce, the literacy rate, total population (log), and population density.[100] All these variables are calculated using the 1930 census, and they capture socioeconomic conditions *before* the period covered by the dependent variable (1932-1946). Including these variables measured at the middle of the period (1940) instead of 1930 produces the same conclusions.

Finally, in some specifications I use state-level fixed effects to account for potentially relevant factors that distinguish municipalities located across different states. Mexican states are known to have many different economic, political, and cultural features that could conceivably influence the explanatory variables and the incidence of irregular armed groups. Including state fixed effects allows me to control for unobserved factors operating at this level.

3.4.3 Results

Table 3.1 presents results for a series of cross-sectional ordinary-least-squares (OLS) regressions of the following form:

$$rural\ militias_i = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 cristero\ insurgency_i + \gamma_2 agrarian\ reform_i + \beta \boldsymbol{X}_i + \alpha_{s(i)} + \varepsilon_i$$

Rural militias$_i$ is the number of localities in municipality *i* in which a militia unit operated between 1932 and 1946. *Cristero insurgency*$_i$ is the dummy variable capturing

[100] Settlements of less than 2,500 people are considered rural. The share of the population working in industry and commerce is a good indicator of development, as it is strongly correlated with GDP per capita estimates at the state level. The literacy rate is calculated as the number of people of 10 years of age or more that knew how to read and write, divided by total population. Although positively correlated, correlation coefficients between these socioeconomic variables are below 0.3, which suggests they each capture independent information.

resistance to state anticlericalism during the Cristero War, *agrarian reform*$_i$ is the percentage of the population in the municipality benefitted by agrarian reform up to 1946, X_i is the vector of controls, and $\alpha_{s(i)}$ is a state fixed effect for municipality *i* located in state *s*.

The baseline specification in column 1 includes only measures for the two key explanatory factors. The extended specification in column 2 adds controls for insurgency during the Revolution, preexisting state capacity, and the range of geographic and socioeconomic factors. Column 3 also includes all controls and adds a full set of state fixed effects. Standard errors in all regressions throughout the chapter are robust to arbitrary heteroskedasticity.

In all specifications, the relationships of interest are in the expected direction and statistically significant at conventional levels. When all controls and fixed effects are included (column 3), the coefficient on the Cristero War dummy indicates that, on average, municipalities that participated in the religious rebellion had 0.5 more state-sanctioned militia units within their borders in the following decades.

This systematic association supports the argument that the state was more likely to perpetuate an irregular coercive apparatus in areas of deep Catholic opposition, where its early anticlericalism had resulted in a deficit of basic legitimacy. The finding suggests that such kind of resistance to state authority can create incentives for central states to engage in long-lasting cooperation with coercive actors in society, rather than monopolizing violence. Rural militias not only collaborated with the state during the rebellion, as historical studies have found. They continued to play a role in the surveillance of communities where, given the clash between the state project and entrenched local values, unwillingness to comply had become the norm.

Table 3.1. Linear models of rural militia activity between 1932 and 1946

	Dependent variable: number of rural militias in the municipality		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Cristero War insurgency	0.67***	0.41***	0.45***
	(9.47)	(5.99)	(5.63)
% agrarian reform beneficiaries (1916-1946)	0.004*	0.007**	0.01***
	(2.08)	(3.22)	(4.31)
Revolution insurgency		0.19***	0.12*
		(3.38)	(2.09)
State officials per 1,000 (1900)		0.01	-0.01
		(0.93)	(-0.80)
Terrain roughness		0.001**	0.001**
		(3.29)	(2.72)
Distance to Mex City		-0.0004***	-0.0005
		(-5.94)	(-1.72)
Distance to state capital		0.001*	0.001
		(2.34)	(1.71)
% rural pop (1930)		0.005***	0.005***
		(4.45)	(5.26)
% in industry and commerce (1930)		-0.006	-0.006
		(-0.88)	(-0.87)
% literate (1930)		-0.003	0.01***
		(-1.38)	(3.52)
Log population (1930)		0.47***	0.53***
		(14.06)	(12.87)
Population density (1930)		-0.001**	-0.001***
		(-3.28)	(-3.62)
Constant	0.41***	-3.88***	-5.63***
	(13.78)	(-12.18)	(-10.19)
State fixed effects	No	No	Yes
R^2	0.06	0.26	0.38
N	2,217	1,880	1,880

Each model is an OLS regression with heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors. t statistics in parentheses. The number of observations in models 2 and 3 drops due to the lower number of municipalities in 1900 and missing values in the control variables.

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Turning to the relationship between agrarian reform and irregular militias, the results also show a positive and significant association after controlling for potential confounding factors. Based on the estimation in column 3, a ten percentage point increase in the beneficiaries of land reform is associated to 0.1 more militia units operating in the villages within a municipality, on average. Interestingly, the coefficient on Cristero insurgency is more substantial. This suggests that the religious cleavage was of overriding importance in the investing of coercive power in militias, contrary to conventional class-based interpretations both in state discourse and the historiography. Nonetheless, the results are consistent with state-builders surrendering strict control over coercion in order to impose agrarian reform, another highly contentious aspect of the revolutionary project. As mentioned, different combinations of political expediency and ideological commitment to lower-class interests likely lay behind this strategy, with the latter reaching its peak under Cardenismo.

This particular interpretation of the result, however, should be taken with caution. Agrarian reform may be endogenous to the presence of rural defense forces; in the absence of an instrument for agrarian reform, it is not possible to determine the extent to which the observed relationship is driven by reverse causality.

Similarly, given the contradictory roles played by the militias in local class struggles, a positive association does not constitute evidence that rural forces invariably worked as bulwarks of agrarian reform, as official state rhetoric would have it. To the contrary, archival and secondary sources indicate that in many instances they acted on behalf of propertied interests allied with conservative military officers, harassing land petitioners and restricting access to granted lands. In this sense, their relatively greater presence in municipalities with more land reform beneficiaries could reflect a defensive strategy adopted by these interests. Any

generalization about the political role of militias in agrarian conflicts and the objectives pursued by the state in this domain would mask considerable variation.

Yet these issues aside, this result makes clear that class conflict in the countryside, as the religious divide, mapped onto the distribution of state-sanctioned militia forces. The empirical analysis thus lends support to my argument that deep social divisions concerning the role of religion and the distribution of property conditioned the new state's ability to secure consent among broad segments of society, and crystallized in the exercise of coercive power through civil society itself.

The control variables indicate that militias tended to be more prevalent in municipalities characterized by rougher terrain and in rural areas, consistent with the qualitative evidence on their policing functions in the periphery. Interestingly, municipalities that experienced violence or insurgency during the armed phase of the Revolution also appear to have more irregular forces on average. Patterns of revolutionary mobilization thus seem to have had an impact on the social and spatial distribution of the means of coercion in subsequent decades.

In sum, these results indicate that the most divisive elements of the postrevolutionary project shaped the territorial organization of coercion, as well as state strategies toward paramilitarism. The reliance on civilian armed actors linked to the military became a staple feature of Mexico's authoritarian regime during the twentieth century. To an extent that had been difficult to fully appreciate and document, order in the countryside was maintained through an informal coercive-institutional structure that transgressed the formal boundaries of the state. The results in this section trace the historical roots of this mode of exercising power to the religious and class cleavages that structured political loyalties and attitudes toward the new state in its

formative period. The next section examines the implications of this reliance on militia forces for the development of security and justice institutions in the long run.

3.5 Historical Paramilitarism and the Underdevelopment of Security and Justice Institutions

Qualitative archival evidence points to an extensive role of rural militias in maintaining order, mediating local conflicts, and transmitting information upwards to the military. As explained in section 3.2, their territorial coverage and influence on local life seems to have decreased over time. The army increasingly restricted control over coercive power by deciding which groups to arm and disarm. However, it is telling that rural defense forces continue to exist to this day as non-professional agents of order rooted in local society. Under the oversight of the military, they have long served as tools of repression, mediation, and surveillance operating within society itself. Yet formally, policing and the administration of justice were historically responsibilities of civilian authorities in the states and municipalities, as they continue to be today.

I argue that the constant meddling of militias in local affairs, and their unwillingness to surrender the informal power they possessed, inhibited the development of institutional capacity by regular state structures in charge of law and order. The mechanisms linking the historical presence of rural defense forces to fragile local state institutions are straightforward, and below I discuss qualitative evidence in their support. First, they served as a substitute for the construction of a civil apparatus capable of enforcing rules, solving conflicts, and maintaining order. Second, the military, as the principal to whom militias had to respond, and the militias themselves, had incentives to obstruct that process. The development of a capable local apparatus, with effective

civil police forces and other formal institutions, would have weakened their social control and forced them to share, if not surrender, control over the local use of coercion.

This section thus turns the presence of militia forces from a product of the struggles of the formative period of the state, into an explanatory variable. I estimate a series of regression models to systematically examine the relationship between this historical factor and the law enforcement capacities of the civil governmental apparatus in the contemporary period. To check the robustness of this association, I examine a variety of relevant law and order outcomes.

My focus is on the ability of the state to penetrate territory and society through formal and professional institutions, with the purpose of deterring crime and keeping the peace in a routinized, regular, legal-rational way. This contrasts with exceptional methods to restore or impose order, including emergency interventions by the center and the deployment of military troops to perform conventional public security functions.

3.5.1 Outcome variables

Local police strength

As a first entry into the regular law and order capabilities of the state in the contemporary period, I examine the strength of municipal police forces. Under Mexico's legal system, local police forces are the primary institutions responsible for public security. Their structural weakness is widely considered to be an underlying cause of the lasting militarization of security in several parts of the country, not only for counterdrug operations but even basic policing. According to a 2014 bill proposed by the executive to reform the country's police system, some 24% of municipalities in the country lacked an organized police force due to "political or budgetary reasons," and only 14 of 31 states had one in all of their municipalities. Among existing local police bodies, 86% were composed of less than 100 officers; the bottom 45%

averaged only 12, and low salaries and a lack of professionalization were the norm. Municipal police forces thus "lack the material and human resources required to correctly perform their functions, or even cover the territory effectively."[101]

I argue that the central state's historical alliance with citizen militias, operated via the military, is an important factor behind contemporary police weakness. Already in the early 1920s, a bill in Congress considered irregular forces to be "a threat hanging over local governments" and called for their disarmament in order to "restore municipalities' constitutional right to command their own police."[102] Some of the complaints and petitions to disarm the militias found in the presidential archives came from mayors themselves.[103] In one case, the *defensa* was accused of attacking the local police and obstructing the government's operation.[104]

More frequently, the state relied upon the army and the militias to deal with banditry, petty crime, and agrarian discontent. For the federal government, this worked as a strategy to subordinate local authorities. Although fragmentary, the evidence of rural defense forces and regular military troops substituting local governments in domestic policing is overwhelming (Rath 2013). Where historical circumstances had made them the dominant coercion-wielding actors, then, civilian authorities lacked the need or the opportunity to build their own capacities.

To evaluate the generalizability of this claim and assess whether the potential consequences are still observable, I use two measures of local police strength. The first is the ratio of police per hundred thousand citizens in each municipality. The information comes from

[101] Iniciativa de Decreto por el que se reforman los artículos 21, 73, 104, 105, 115, 116 y 123 de la Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos. Available at: http://www.senado.gob.mx/comisiones/justicia/docs/Audiencias_Seg_Justicia/Iniciativa_Poder_Ejecutivo.pdf
[102] Proyecto de decreto por el que se derogan autorizaciones concedidas a gobiernos de los estados para organizar fuerzas de seguridad, AGN, Obregón-Calles, 104-D-9.
[103] For example, AGN, Abelardo Rodríguez, 541.51/53; Lázaro Cárdenas, 542.1/2646.
[104] Queja en contra de la Defensa Rural de Cacalutla, Atoyac de Álvarez, AGN, Abelardo Rodríguez, 541.5/63-5.

INEGI and is available biennially starting in 2008.[105] I average the four available data points, but results are robust to using any of the years. Police per capita rates do not capture several important dimensions of police professionalization and development, including responsiveness, political neutrality, and accountability. However, it is a measure of the institutional resources available to municipal governments, of particular relevance in the Mexican context.

As a second measure of police capacity, I use the number of police stations, posts, booths, or similar infrastructures per thousand square kilometers in 2014, which I calculated using data from INEGI. The latter is a measure of the extent to which the police has physically penetrated the local territory, as well as its ability to perform its functions beyond the municipal seat.

Municipal justice institutions

In addition to the development of the police, I investigate if the presence of rural militias in the past is systematically related to the strength of local justice and conflict-resolution institutions. The majority of civil and criminal cases in the country are handled by state level public ministries (prosecutors) and judicial systems. However, the power to administer justice concerning basic public order regulations, settle minor controversies, and intervene in local incidents to prevent the commission of crimes lies with the *jueces cívicos* (civic judges) in the municipality.

These local authorities handle petty offenses, mediate in disputes between residents, and serve as links with legally competent authorities when a crime is committed. They can impose fines and other sanctions, as well as authorize short-term arrests. In this sense, civic judges can

[105] Tellingly, the number of local police officers was unknown before the first census implemented by INEGI in 2009.

play an important role in maintaining local order and preventing the escalation of private conflicts or minor infractions.

Qualitative evidence again provides reason to believe that the informal power invested in the militias and the army, as a result of early political conflicts, stunted the development of municipal justice and conflict-solving institutions. In the example provided above to explain the coding of the dataset, residents of a locality in the state of Hidalgo complained in 1933 that members of the local militia decided "who was to be punished and how." Many of the observations in the dataset originate in demands for justice for crimes and abuses committed by members of the militia, addressed to the central state. This pattern again points to the ability of rural forces to subdue formal local institutions. Later, in the context of the counterinsurgency campaigns of the 1970s, conducted with the collaboration of militias, army publications emphasized the intervention of members of the armed forces as "Solomonic judges" in rural areas, to "establish norms of justice" and "reconcile collective sentiments."[106]

To test for the existence of long-run effects, I draw on data on local justice institutions available from INEGI. The relevant indicator is the number of *jueces cívicos* per hundred thousand citizens in each municipality.

Homicides

The above measures rely on the human and physical resources of state agencies to capture the contemporary strength of the state. These resources are expected to directly influence the actual ability of the state to regulate social life and logistically implement decisions (Mann 2012). An alternative operationalization strategy consists in capturing state capacity by proxy,

[106] Revista del Ejército y la Fuerza Aérea, December 1972, 56.

using output-based indicators. This strategy has the disadvantage that the purported measures of stateness may also be reflecting a host of other factors in addition to the underlying capacity to enforce (Fukuyama 2013; Soifer 2016b); however, it reveals the actual performance of the state in relevant functions.

The primary evidence from archival documents suggests that the militias contributed to high levels of violence in the countryside, at least during the 1930s and 1940s when a lack of professionalization and weak command structures were the norm. They were directly implicated in local feuds, and to the extent that their presence interfered with the consolidation of stronger security and justice institutions, they might also be associated with more violence in the long run. To evaluate this possibility, I use the average homicide rate in each municipality from 2000 to 2015. I use the average to capture the structural level of violence independent of short-term fluctuations, but the same results are obtained using other shorter or longer time frames.

Vigilantism

As a final test of the effects of the central state's symbiotic relationship with rural militias on the strength of civil institutions and the rule of law, I examine whether this historical variable is systematically associated with the emergence of vigilante organizations in recent years. This part of the analysis draws heavily on recent work by Philips (2016), who defines vigilante organizations as "sustained associations of private citizens voluntarily seeking to illegally control crime or other social infractions in a planned, premeditated way, involving force or the threat of force." Philips examines the Mexican case and argues that inequality favors the rise of these groups.

The privatization of security provision has intensified in the context of the Mexican war of drugs. In 2013, heavily-armed *autodefensa* (self-defense) groups emerged in several municipalities, most notably in the state of Michoacán. Generalizing about these groups is difficult. It is clear that some tapped into reservoirs of genuine social support. However, as archetypical racketeers (Tilly 1985), they were accused of gross human rights abuses, having links to outright criminal organizations, and preying upon the populations they claimed to defend. The wave of vigilantism spread to other areas; it also reinforced preexisting traditions of grassroots community policing in other states. As mentioned in Section 3.2, the federal government responded by deploying the military and central bureaucrats to Michoacán, colluding with the vigilantes against organized crime, and finally enlisting them in the army's long-existing *defensas rurales*, mimicking the developments of the 1920s.

A history of existence of rural defense groups may be associated with the emergence of modern vigilantism given its weakening effects on formal state institutions. In addition to this institutional mechanism, the cultural (Nunn 2012) and organizational (Daly 2012) legacies of past armed mobilization are a second possible, complementary path. Residents of municipalities where rural defense units were prevalent in the postrevolutionary period could draw upon a long-standing tradition of local organizing to wield coercion and take law and order into their own hands. Inherited norms of behavior and social networks are likely important ingredients of such traditions favorable to collective action.

At this time, the dearth of information on Mexican rural militias, which this study starts to remedy, makes it impossible to carry out detailed case studies and longitudinal analyses to systematically test the mechanisms of historical persistence in this particular case. Anecdotally,

however, the very incorporation of the *autodefensas* into the corps of rural defense forces is revealing of the links between the two.

To test whether historical militia activity and the emergence of vigilantism today are systematically related, I rely on and extend Phillips original data on vigilante organizations. Phillips used media sources to identify municipalities where these groups operated in 2013. His dichotomous variable indicates that they emerged in 76 municipalities located across 13 of 32 states. Following the same approach, I extended his database to cover subsequent years and complement it with information from new official reports on the topic, produced by the National Human Rights Commission (Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos 2013, 2015). In total, the new dataset indicates that self-defense and community policing groups have operated in 145 municipalities since 2013.[107] Running the analysis on the data originally compiled by Phillips produces similar results.

3.5.2 Other variables

The primary relationship of interest in the regressions below is between historical rural militia activity and contemporary law and order outcomes. Historical rural militia activity is coded as the total number of localities within a given municipality in which a rural defense force was active at some point between 1932 and 1946, based on my archival research. All results are consistent to instead coding it as a dichotomous variable.

The regressions reported below also include a vector of covariates that may jointly influence the presence of militias in the past and the dependent variables. These include levels of

[107] A list of sources supporting the coding for each municipality not originally included by Phillips is available from the author.

state capacity before the Revolution,[108] the roughness of terrain within the municipality, distance to both the country's and the state's capitals, population density, the share of the population in rural areas, the literacy rate, and the percentage employed in industry or commerce (a proxy for economic development). As in section 3.4 above, to minimize endogeneity problems, all these variables enter the models as of 1930—before the first data point for the dependent variable and the major expansion of rural defense forces under Cardenismo. All OLS models also include state fixed effects to account for potential unobserved confounders at the state level.[109]

For all outcome variables, I also run a second set of regressions that include more recent covariates. Models for the strength of police and justice institutions include municipal tax revenues per capita to control for governments' financial resources, and the homicide rate to address the possibility of crime levels driving institutional investments. Both of these variables enter the models as an average from 2000 to 2007, whereas measures for the dependent variables start in 2008 or later.

An extended specification on vigilantism includes the average number of police per capita from 2008 to 2012 and the average homicide rate from 2010 to 2012 as predictors. The dataset on vigilante groups coded information from 2013 onwards. These variables are included to control for the possibility that any potential association between historical militia activity and contemporary vigilantism is driven by state institutional features or crime rates. Additionally, all models in this second set include the Gini coefficient of economic inequality and (log) per capita

[108] I report results using the number of state officials per capita in 1900 as a measure of pre-revolutionary state capacity in the municipality, but results for all models are robust to instead using data on police per capita. Although the latter is more directly connected to law and order, it contains more missing values in the 1900 census.
[109] I use logistic regression to estimate models with presence of vigilante groups as the dependent variable. Potential state-level effects are not taken into account in these models because the dependent variable does not vary within the majority of states.

GDP in 2010 (in 2005 US dollars). The sources are the National Council of Evaluation of Social Development Policy and the United Nations Development Programme, respectively.

Naturally, these post-treatment confounders may introduce bias in the estimated relationships. Variables introduced as controls in this second set of models may themselves be—in fact, in some cases are expected to be—directly affected by historical militia presence. Notice, however, that adding these covariates to the models is more likely to bias the effects of "treatment" (historical militia presence) downwards, rather than the opposite. Their inclusion serves as a demanding robustness check and may indirectly speak to the underlying mechanisms driving the observed associations.

3.5.3 Results

Table 3.2 presents results for OLS regressions with municipal police strength and judicial capacity as dependent variables. Results for homicide rates and vigilantism appear in Table 3.3. In models for vigilantism I use logistic regression, given the dichotomous nature of the dependent variable.

Overall, a strong negative association exists between the reliance on state-sanctioned rural militias during the state's formative period, and the strength of civil law and order institutions in the long run. Results are statistically significant at conventional levels and in the expected direction for all of the multiple outcome variables used, whether direct measures of state institutional resources or output-based indicators of stateness. Importantly, these associations do not appear to be driven by levels of state capacity prior to the Revolution, geography, remoteness, socioeconomic structure, or other potential confounders.

Table 3.2. Linear models of state capacity for law and order, 2008-2014

	DV: local police per capita, average 2008-14			DV: police stations per 1,000 km^2, 2014		DV: civic judges per capita, 2014		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
# of localities with rural militia (1932-46)	-38.5***	-28.1***	-20.9***	-2.03***	-2.88***	-6.21***	-4.99***	-3.22**
	(-7.35)	(-5.11)	(-3.91)	(-3.44)	(-4.39)	(-6.43)	(-5.34)	(-3.27)
State officials per 1,000 (1900)		-12.8*	-9.99	-1.71	-1.70		-1.92*	-1.71*
		(-2.27)	(-1.87)	(-1.60)	(-1.62)		(-2.34)	(-2.20)
Terrain roughness		-0.24**	-0.16*	-0.04***	-0.03**		-0.05***	-0.04**
		(-3.18)	(-2.39)	(-4.83)	(-3.15)		(-3.74)	(-3.05)
Distance to Mex City		-0.15	-0.17	0.01	0.01		-0.16***	-0.16***
		(-0.85)	(-0.94)	(0.87)	(0.74)		(-5.01)	(-5.20)
Distance to state capital		-0.74**	-0.54*	-0.06*	-0.04		0.052	0.07
		(-3.21)	(-2.47)	(-2.35)	(-1.79)		(1.63)	(1.83)
% rural pop (1930)		2.97***	2.62***	0.2**	0.27***		0.43***	0.29***
		(6.60)	(5.46)	(3.04)	(3.62)		(7.20)	(4.61)
% in industry and commerce (1930)		9.39	9.96	-0.08	-0.34		0.66	0.96
		(0.97)	(1.01)	(-0.20)	(-0.85)		(0.65)	(0.94)
% literate (1930)		6.62**	5.13**	0.86***	0.33		1.31***	1.22**
		(3.18)	(2.58)	(4.06)	(1.27)		(3.58)	(3.27)
Population density (1930)		-0.08	-0.02	0.38**	0.37**		-0.050	-0.04
		(-0.32)	(-0.10)	(3.11)	(3.08)		(-1.83)	(-1.42)
Homicide rate (avg 2000-07)			-2.39		-0.01			0.22
			(-1.66)		(-0.09)			(0.52)
Municipal taxes per capita (avg 2000-07)			0.01		-0.03			0.04
			(0.07)		(-0.96)			(1.89)
Inequality (2010 Gini)			-18.2***		-0.08			-4.69***
			(-4.46)		(-0.25)			(-5.36)
Log GDP per capita (2010)			17.1		31.5***			-6.88
			(0.29)		(3.44)			(-0.86)
Constant	184.6***	-126.6	496.5	-40.3***	-319.4***	6.21***	12.6	270.7***
	(9.76)	(-1.40)	(0.89)	(-3.52)	(-3.48)	(4.66)	(0.92)	(3.68)
State fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2	0.29	0.31	0.33	0.34	0.36	0.21	0.26	0.29
N	2,331	1,912	1,899	1,784	1,771	1,836	1,836	1,823

Each model is an OLS regression with heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors. t statistics in parentheses. * p<0.05 ** p<0.01 ***p<0.001

Table 3.3. Models of strength of law and order, 2000-2016

	Dependent variable: homicide rate, average 2000-15			Dependent variable: presence of vigilante group, 2013-16		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
# localities rural militia (1932-46)	0.99***	0.78**	0.89***	0.50***	0.41***	0.27***
	(4.00)	(3.29)	(3.61)	(9.86)	(7.26)	(4.45)
State officials per 1,000 (1900)		0.33*	0.33*		0.10*	0.092
		(2.49)	(2.53)		(2.41)	(1.83)
Terrain roughness		0.02***	0.01***		0.002***	0.002**
		(6.49)	(5.56)		(4.14)	(2.69)
Distance to Mex City		0.02**	0.02**		-0.001	-0.001
		(3.15)	(3.23)		(-1.20)	(-1.49)
Distance to state capital		0.04***	0.03***		0.003	0.008
		(6.17)	(5.29)		(1.53)	(0.41)
% rural pop (1930)		0.028**	0.016		-0.01**	-0.009
		(2.69)	(1.52)		(-2.83)	(-1.87)
% in industry and commerce (1930)		-0.17*	-0.12		0.032	0.042
		(-2.43)	(-1.72)		(1.14)	(1.24)
% literate (1930)		-0.094*	0.015		-0.04***	-0.05*
		(-2.10)	(0.31)		(-3.34)	(-2.50)
Population density (1930)		0.0041	0.006		-0.007	-0.01*
		(1.33)	(1.79)		(-1.65)	(-1.96)
Inequality (2010 Gini)			0.15			0.16***
			(1.56)			(5.81)
Log GDP per capita (2010)			-5.66***			0.28
			(-4.83)			(0.70)
Police per capita (avg 2008-12)						-0.002*
						(-1.98)
Homicide rate (avg 2010-12)						0.007*
						(2.34)
Constant	2.94***	-7.84*	36.6***	-3.28***	-1.93***	-10.7**
	(8.62)	(-2.08)	(3.45)	(-28.83)	(-3.36)	(-2.99)
State fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
R^2	0.36	0.42	0.42			
N	2,349	1,917	1,915	2,349	1,917	1,909

Columns 1 to 3 show OLS estimates with heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors and t statistics in parentheses.
Columns 4 to 6 show logistic regression estimates with z statistics in parentheses.
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Columns 1-3 in Table 3.2 indicate that the more rural militia units operated in a municipality historically, the fewer police officers per capita exist today. Columns 4 and 5 show that this historical factor is also negatively related to the number of police stations relative to territory. These results are consistent with irregular militia forces carrying out local social control functions under the military's purview, thereby inhibiting police development in the long run. Based on columns 2 and 4, for every additional locality with an organized militia unit, the municipality has, on average, 28 less law enforcement agents per hundred thousand citizens today, and 2 police stations less per thousand square kilometers.

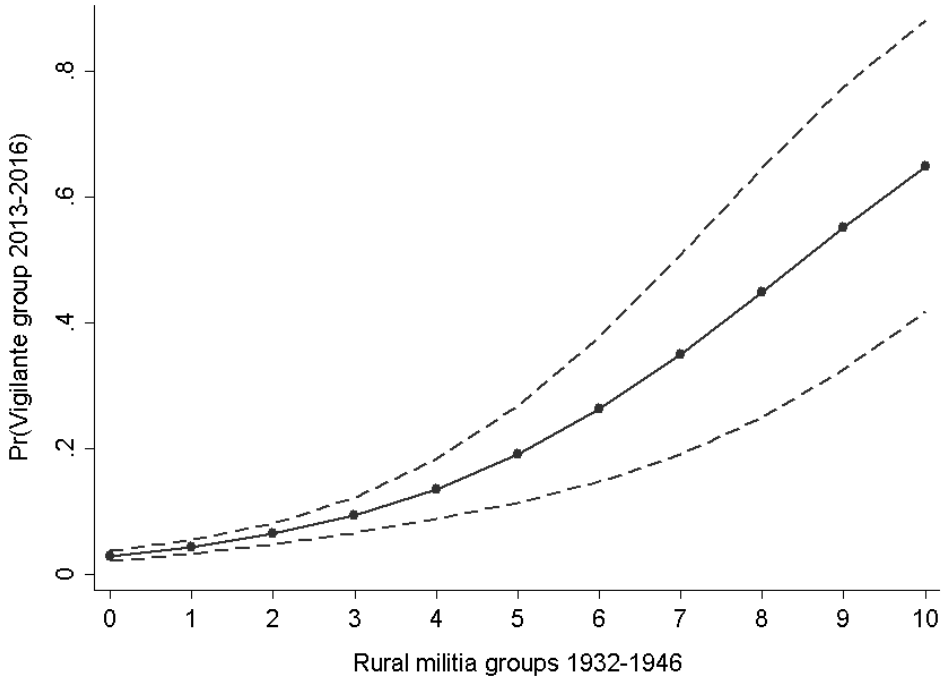
Columns 6 to 8 in Table 3.2 indicate that local justice and conflict-resolution institutions across Mexican municipalities are also weaker on average where the *defensas rurales* were more prevalent. After controlling for potential confounders, column 7 reports 5 less civic judges per hundred thousand citizens for every additional militia unit in the municipality. The contemporary weakness of formal law and order institutions, then, is deeply associated with the central state's historical willingness to tolerate and ally with local paramilitary forces to maintain order. The central state's connivance, as analyzed in section 3.4, was in turn determined by the strong political polarization and resistance surrounding the revolutionary state-building project.

Turning to the output-based measures of the strength of law and order institutions, columns 1 to 3 in Table 3.3 shows a strong negative relationship between the reliance on militias and the current capacity of the state to perform its core function of preventing violent death. For every additional locality in which a militia unit operated in the 1930s and 1940s, the average homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants from 2000 to 2015 is about one unit higher.

Columns 4 to 6 in Table 3.3 indicate that the presence of state-sanctioned rural militias historically is also strongly associated with the presence of vigilante organizations today, even

after accounting for a number of potential confounders like geography and socioeconomic structure. Using the results presented in column 5 and holding all other variables constant at their means, the predicted probability of contemporary vigilantism goes from 0.03 in municipalities with no evidence of historical militia activity, to 0.65 when the number of rural militia units in the municipality takes its highest value in the sample (10). To illustrate this result graphically, Figure 3.2 below shows the predicted probability that a vigilante group operated in a municipality between 2013 and 2016 as a function of the number of organized rural militia groups present in the localities of that same municipality between 1932 and 1946, according to my historical dataset. To generate the predicted probabilities, all other variables in model 5 of Table 3.3 were held at their means.

Figure 3.2. Predicted probability of vigilantism in municipalities between 2013 and 2016, at different values of the historical rural militias variable and with other variables at their means



Note: Probabilities calculated based on the logistic regression results presented in column 5 of Table 3.3. Dotted lines represent 95% confidence intervals.

The coefficient decreases in size but remains statistically significant if the contemporary capabilities of local state agencies—as measured by local police per capita—are introduced as a control. This suggests that while the mechanisms linking historical paramilitarism to the recent emergence of vigilante groups partially operate at the level of state institutions, the effects also run through cultural and organizational channels within society. Consistent with Philips's findings (2016), column 6 shows that economic inequality is positively associated with vigilante mobilization. However, the negative coefficient on police per capita in the same model contrasts with his conclusion that state capacity is not systematically related to vigilantism. Most likely, this difference emerges from the fact that his measures of the state (GDP per capita and libraries per capita) are not directly linked to law enforcement.

Overall, the results presented in this section point to a strong connection between patterns of reorganization and distribution of coercion during the period of state formation, and the contemporary weakness of security and justice institutions. The reliance on irregular, village-based armed groups to maintain local order and counter societal resistance stabilized the postrevolutionary state; paradoxically, however, it held back the development of formal civil institutions capable of upholding the rule of law in the long run.

3.6 Conclusions

This chapter carried out two main tasks: first, it examined how bitter political conflict and high levels of political polarization shaped the process of rebuilding a state with control over physical force after revolutionary collapse; second, it traced long-term local-level variation in the strength of civil security and justice institutions to variations in that historical process. Understanding why, when, and where central states succeed or fail at concentrating coercion into

regular security apparatuses is a fundamental question of political development. I argued that during processes of state formation characterized by strong factionalism and sharp cleavages, the central state may relinquish a strict monopoly and delegate violence to social actors, in order to enforce compliance and supplement a lack of legitimacy.

For emerging states with a contentious political agenda, the alliance with local armed groups in the social realm may help in producing order in peripheral areas, breaking resistance among social sectors excluded from the state-building coalition, and pushing through their political project. Such strategies, adopted out of ideological commitment and political expediency, may have fateful consequences for state development in the long run. To the extent that control over coercion remains loose and social control rests on semi-formal actors, the path to strong civil security and justice institutions is closed off.

My analysis identifies historical continuity in spatial patterns of institutional weakness across Mexico's territory, which defies simple characterizations of the current security and human rights crisis as a product of modern organized crime and drug trafficking. It also sheds new light on the long history of paramilitarism, rural violence, and military intervention in domestic security in Mexico, which has been minimized by the conventional narrative of a hegemonic, stable, and only occasionally repressive authoritarian regime. The evidence I present suggests that the contemporary reliance on the military for domestic security is not simply a consequence of the weakness of civil security institutions, but rather that the role played by the military and its semiofficial militia apparatus historically contributed to that very underdevelopment. The chapter thus provides a historically-grounded understanding of the poor shape of crucial institutions and suggests that this weakness is associated with the ways in which coercion was historically organized to deal with resistance to the state.

From a strictly Weberian standard, the importance of rural defense forces for the postrevolutionary order, and their century-old persistence, represent symptoms of a defective, incomplete process of state formation. Deep-seated societal disagreement and contention around the political project advanced by state-builders in the aftermath of civil war can be said to have arrested the process of monopolization of violence by formal security forces, bound by strict rules and clearly differentiated from society. This insight may be potentially exportable to other experiences of state formation fraught with internal dissension.

However, the reliance on coercive actors outside the realm of formal institutions should not be readily conflated with state "weakness." Despite the multiple principal-agent problems in the relationship between states and rural defense forces, the latter played a fundamental role in the reproduction of state rule and the enforcement of social order. Their durability presupposed the state's tacit even if reluctant consent, and they allowed the military to deeply embed itself in local society at a low financial cost. In this sense, militia units stabilized the state and augmented its power, rather than being unambiguous signs of weakness.

3.7 Appendix

Table 3.4. Descriptive statistics. Dataset on rural militias and the rule of law in Mexico

	Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Dependent variables					
Number of localities with rural militia (1932-46)	2,349	0.61	1.16	0	10
Municipal police per 100,000 people (average 2008-14)	2,434	372.68	588	0	7,641
Municipal police stations per km^2 (2014)	2,277	25.25	67.22	0	939.4
Civic judges per 100,000 people (2014)	2,339	37.63	96.8	0	1,389
Homicides per 100,000 people (average 2000-15)	2,457	14.21	16.81	0	253.1
Vigilante organization (binary) (2013-16)	2,457	0.06	0.23	0	1
Independent variables					
Cristero War insurgency (binary) (1926-29)	2,303	0.26	0.44	0	1
Agrarian reform beneficiaries (1916-1946, % 1946 pop)	2,268	9.76	9.93	0	80.15
Mexican Revolution insurgency (binary) (1910-1917)	2,264	0.34	0.47	0	1
State officials per 1,000 people (1900)	1,983	1.21	2.15	0	25.10
Terrain roughness (Std. Dev. altitude within mun.)	2,425	171.73	156.65	0	1,108
Distance to Mexico City (km from municipal head)	2,457	455.65	374.36	2.21	2,299
Distance to state capital (km from municipal head)	2,457	100.35	70.67	0	524.2
Rural population (% 1930)	2,223	87.54	24.84	0	100
Population in industry and commerce (% 1930)	2,233	2.90	3.77	0	60.31
Literacy (% 1930)	2,233	20.62	12.23	0	65.33
Population (1930, logged)	2,233	8.26	1.06	5.32	12.13
Population density (1930)	2,199	33.57	65.96	0	1,538
Homicides per 100,000 people (average 2000-07)	2,454	11.33	13.71	0	151.4
Municipal taxes per capita (pesos, average 2000-07)	2,424	61.61	124.98	0.003	2,193
Economic inequality (Gini, 2010)	2,454	41.20	3.90	28.6	59.10
GDP per capita (2010, in 2005 US dollars, logged)	2,456	8.96	0.45	7.79	10.76
Municipal police per 100,000 people (average 2008-12)	2,433	361.44	572.11	0	7,079
Homicides per 1000,000 people (average 2010-12)	2,456	20.17	34.55	0	566.9

4 THE "EXTIRPATION OF FANATICISM": AGRARIAN REFORM, MASS EDUCATION, AND CITIZEN REGISTRATION IN POSTREVOLUTIONARY MEXICO[110]

Abstract

Rather than external warfare, turning the state into a more powerful vehicle for partisan interests within society is frequently the engine for state-building. Because partisan goals are pursued, elite incentives to build state capacity vary across territory, as does citizens' willingness to comply with the state. Institutions in polarized political systems thus develop unevenly, and state capacity across territory comes to reflect underlying cleavages. I examine the implications of this argument for the development of non-coercive state institutions of social control across territory. Using novel historical data on the extension of mass primary education, agrarian reform, and the construction of the civil registry in postrevolutionary Mexico, where a sharp clerical-anticlerical cleavage was salient during the era of state-building, I show that state elites made heavier institutional investments in parts of the country where the Church was historically stronger and Catholics had rebelled in response to state anticlericalism.

[110] The quote in the title is from Emilio Portes Gil, president of Mexico from 1928 to 1930. As an Attorney General after his presidency, he published *The Conflict between the Civil Power and the Clergy*, an essay distributed in English to reach an international audience. There, Portes Gil wrote: "The stand taken by the Catholic clergy, and its seditious, visionary and unpatriotic activities, induce it to believe that it will thereby achieve the restoration of inordinate power like that wielded by it in the past, and it fails to take into account the fact that it has at the present day broken down in the presence of the new organization of the modern state…*which has set for itself as one of its specific objects, the extirpation of fanaticism*" (1935, 5).

4.1 Introduction

Why do states develop stronger institutions for social control and provide more public goods in some areas of their territory than in others? Although coercion and taxation have historically constituted the core dimensions of the state, today states extend their action to a wide range of regulatory, cultural, and welfare functions (Lindert 2004; Mann 2012). In Latin America, the twentieth century brought major transformations in the scope and depth of public authority (Whitehead 1994), despite the comparatively mediocre achievements of states in the region (Centeno 2002). The spread of mass public education and other social services, improvements in administration and census taking, the construction of infrastructure, and similar undertakings vastly expanded the knowledge available to states about society and their capacity to shape citizens' everyday behavior and life prospects. As in other dimensions, however, considerable unevenness characterized the development of state institutions within each country's borders.

This chapter thus goes beyond the analysis of coercive and fiscal capabilities to examine spatial and temporal variation in the historical development of other state institutions and mechanisms of social control beyond the use of force, using evidence from Mexico. For the purposes of the chapter, institutions of social control are understood as those that are employed to "control society from within" (Tarrow 2015, 5). Although these vary with context, as I discuss below, the definition is intended to capture institutions that enhance the state's ability to govern by constraining contention and inducing attitudinal change among citizens, without resorting to physical coercion. The paradox is that some of these mechanisms, while cementing state control over social life, can also be carriers of rights and valued goods, as is perhaps most clear with education.

Consistent with the rest of this dissertation, the theoretical focus is on how political contestation between insiders and outsiders to state-building coalitions shapes institutional development across territory. The argument in this chapter is that during processes of state building characterized by high levels of political polarization, governing elites invest more heavily in the state's capacity to regulate social life and transform society where opponents along salient domestic cleavages are stronger, precisely in order to counter their strength. As a result of these investments during formative periods, long-run institutional outcomes thus reflect historical patterns of political conflict.

I substantiate this general argument empirically by evaluating the impact of the religious cleavage that pitted the emerging anticlerical state against political Catholics after the Mexican Revolution on the spatial configuration of the state, specifically its institutions to penetrate and regulate society. During the 1920s and 1930s, postrevolutionary governments centralized political power, crafted a revolutionary myth, and implemented a number of state- and nation-building policies that brought the central state into direct and routine contact with the population in many domains of their lives. At the core of this project were agrarian reform and schooling, conceived as instruments to transform the social structure, generate social stability, and mold a new kind of modern citizen who would embrace the revolutionary state as the legitimate political authority.

I draw on newly compiled municipal level data on agrarian reform, educational outcomes, and the construction of a civil registration system, to probe the relationship between religious conflict and the development of the state in these domains. Rather than drawing conclusions from a single indicator or policy domain, these highly disaggregated historical data allow for systematic and comprehensive examination of various forms of deploying

infrastructural power to "control civil society from within." My analysis thus broadly covers state efforts to penetrate society and constrain contention through access to land, schooling, and the development of administrative capacities to register citizens and keep record of basic events in their lives.

First, using a difference-in-differences design, I find that land allocations under the program of agrarian reform—which bolstered central state control at the local level—increased disproportionately in municipalities that experienced insurgency during the religious Cristero War (1926-1929). I also find that municipalities with a heavier Church presence at the onset of the 20th century, prior to the Revolution, experienced greater increases in literacy during the crucial period of expansion of mass education under the anticlerical state, and had higher school enrollment rates by 1950. The positive association between the Church's historical strength and educational attainment persists to this day, as measured by average years of schooling across municipalities, which is suggestive of long-term differences in state educational infrastructure. Finally, I document a positive relationship between religious insurgency and the subsequent expansion of state registration capabilities through the civil registry in the 1930s.

I argue that these findings emerge because in order to implement its ideological commitment to curb the social and cultural influence of the Catholic Church and dampen religious resistance, the anticlerical political coalition that rebuilt the Mexican state made comparatively heavier investments in institutions of social control in more religious areas. State attempts at social engineering did not necessarily produce the intended secularizing consequences, as staunchly Catholic communities selectively appropriated the state project and, in an interactive process, actively renegotiated its most radical elements. However, institutional outcomes in postrevolutionary Mexico would reflect early efforts by the anticlerical state to

cement control and remake society in areas of historical Church strength and violent religious mobilization. Hence, considering who builds the state and for what ends helps account for uneven patterns of institutional development.

Importantly, the statistical associations just described are not an obvious product of selection or reverse causality. They are robust to accounting for historical, pre-revolutionary differences in the strength and presence of state institutions across municipalities, as well as a wide range of potential confounders. This is consistent with the view that the conflict between Church and state in the period under study had an independent effect on the type of institutional development that occurred in different parts of Mexico in the twentieth century, with legacies that extend to the present time.

To further inform and substantiate these quantitative results, I also discuss qualitative historical evidence that supports the interpretation that a commitment to secularize society and, after the large rebellion of the late 1920s, to moderate opposition among the Catholic population, weighed heavily in elite decisions about the construction of political institutions. These complementary pieces of evidence document that governing elites during the formative period of the postrevolutionary state indeed consciously conceived the extension of social regulatory institutions as part of a struggle with religion and the institutional Church, and thus support the argument that the religious cleavage motivated decisions about institution-building.

I draw this supplementary evidence from archival sources, elites' personal papers and speeches, and an extensive review of the secondary historical literature on the policies analyzed here. Existing historical studies, however, have not jointly examined different state institutions for social control, taken a long-term view extending to the present, or exploited the extensive

quantitative data compiled for this chapter, which allows for a more systematic treatment and yields novel and more generalizable insights.

Beyond the statistical findings, the causal importance of the religious cleavage in shaping the spatial outcomes of postrevolutionary state formation, independent from prior differences in state capacity and other factors, is also asserted on historical-analytical grounds. Despite the state-building projects of the late nineteenth century (Saylor 2014; Soifer 2015), in Latin America the emergence of states with extensive domestic infrastructures, entering into routine and direct contact with ordinary citizens, mobilizing the majority of their revenue internally, and broadly providing services like schooling to a majority of the population is a phenomenon of the twentieth century. Spatial variation in state capacity was not fully predetermined or simply inherited from the pre-revolutionary past, but took form as twentieth-century state-builders dealt with political contention and sought to assert the power of the state in politically polarized societies. In the case of Mexico, different beliefs about the proper role of Catholicism in political and social life were important determinants of such polarization in the decades following the Revolution, when fundamental decisions about state institutions were made.[111]

More generally, the range of evidence in this chapter provides further support for my argument that the political conflicts prevalent during formative periods of state building can spawn lasting and uneven legacies across territory, particularly when such state-building episodes are marked by high levels of political polarization that shape institutional investments. The argument and results thus inform how political opposition to central states influences incentives to provide public goods and build regulatory and administrative institutions. In the

[111] Expert historians share the view that Church-state conflict in the early twentieth century marks a crucial moment in the development of the state. In his classic work on the Mexican Revolution, Knight writes that "revolutionary anti-clericalism...was not simply a cyclical revival of the old liberal conscience; above all, it marked the beginning of another story—that of the new state's struggle for its supposed birthright" (1986, 505). See also (Fallaw 2013).

case of public education, the analysis also provides insight into the cultural aspects of revolution and processes of nation-building, specifically into how states allocate efforts to shape attitudes and cultivate attachment and obedience to the nation-state through mass schooling.

Moreover, my findings caution against lumping together different components of state capacity, analytically or empirically. An important conclusion that I draw from this study is that the various institutional dimensions of the state may respond differently to political contestation. In Mexico, although religious opposition during the state's formative period led to persistent fiscal weakness and the articulation of the state with local armed militias to exercise coercion, as I have shown in previous chapters, it also produced stronger investments in other dimensions of statecraft, including education, the redistribution of agrarian property, and institutions to register and regulate civil society.

The rest of this chapter is organized as follows. Section 4.2 presents the general argument that state-building elites have greater incentives to develop state institutions with capacity to penetrate, regulate, and transform civil society in parts of the territory where opposition along a salient political cleavage is more intense. Section 4.3 turns to the Mexican case. It discusses how the concern among governing elites with counteracting the power of the Church and constraining Catholic mass resistance served as a spur for institution-building—thus potentially shaping state capacity outcomes across territory. Section 4.4 analyzes the impact of the Cristero War on agrarian reform at the municipality level, using a difference-in-differences design. Sections 4.5 and 4.6 provide evidence of the relationship between the religious cleavage and the development of social regulatory capacity through schooling and the civil registry, respectively. Section 4.7 concludes.

4.2 Domestic Cleavages and Institutions of Social Control

How do governments in emerging states allocate resources to build political institutions, in particular those that help induce citizen compliance and regulate social life without resorting to the use of coercion? In accordance with the theoretical framework presented in this dissertation, this chapter posits that internal patterns of investment in state institutions of social control respond to the structure of political conflict faced by state-builders as they seek to consolidate power. Varying domestic institutional legacies emerge from the antagonism between rival political camps during state formation.

Although state-building projects may under some circumstances be supported by a broad social consensus, most prominently when common external threats generate national cohesion (Darden and Mylonas 2016; Sambanis, Skaperdas, and Wohlforth 2015), they often take place in politically polarized and fragmented societies where specific parties or groups seek to impose their preferred policies and achieve supremacy through a stronger state. Rather than external warfare, turning the state into a more powerful instrument of partisan interests within society is frequently the engine for state-building. In these cases, processes of state development become tightly connected to particular interests, values, and ideological positions that give political content to the state project and confront other cross-sections of society.

Such conceptions of how the political order should be, I argue, inform decisions about how and where to concentrate state efforts to develop institutions and government capacities for social regulation, with potentially long-lasting consequences. Moreover, where groups excluded from the state-building coalition manage to coordinate and organize resistance that threatens stability, governing elites have further incentives to implement measures that solidify the state's infrastructural control and diffuse opposition, without constant recourse to costly violence. In

short, the incentives to build state institutions of social control across territory vary along domestic political cleavage lines. Regions and groups situated in opposition to the state-building coalition are likely to become preferred targets of state measures to purchase stability, alter loyalties and beliefs, and induce compliance. As a result of these politically-motivated investments, medium- and long-run institutional outcomes related to the state social regulatory functions may come to reflect the history of domestic conflict.

The repertoire of measures that state elites can implement to constrain contention and manufacture basic compliance among dissident social groups ranges from material inducements and access to desired services, to the adoption of techniques that make territory and society more legible and accessible for state officials (Scott 1998).[112] More complex ideological and cultural strategies to secure consent by directly shaping attitudes and beliefs can also be put into practice. Although to different degrees, all modern states seek to secure and justify their rule by shaping identities and beliefs. They construct historical narratives, design school curricula, erect statues and monuments, establish civic calendars, rename streets—they wrap themselves in a set of rituals and rhetorical practices in the hope of obtaining compliance and recognition of their claims to legitimate authority.

Ultimately, the particular combination of deployed strategies is likely to vary with the technological and material resources available to state-builders, as well as their ideologically-constructed interpretations of the sources of resistance. In any case, all the above mechanisms to regulate civil society demand an institutional apparatus, whose development will respond to the nature and depth of internal political antagonisms during state-building.

[112] The choice set, of course, also includes the use of coercion. I have analyzed coercive institutions in a separate chapter.

4.3 Anticlericalism and Institution-building in Mexico

The empirical sections below analyze three different sets of policies adopted by state elites to enhance state social control in the context of postrevolutionary Mexico: agrarian reform, mass schooling, and the construction of the civil registry. The implementation and design of these measures were rooted in a particular diagnosis of the problems of Mexican society, itself reflective of the identity of leaders in the new governing coalition and articulated over the course of revolutionary struggle.[113] For state-builders, both opposition to the emerging regime and social and economic backwardness stemmed from the domination that the Catholic Church and allied landlord interests exerted over vast segments of the population.

State capacity building in all three institutional arenas reflected the commitment among new governing elites to counteract clerical power, and hence the dynamics of conflict along the religious cleavage. Although the conflict over the role of the Church had deep antecedents in the Liberal-Conservative divide of the nineteenth century, it acquired unprecedented salience and intensity with the victory of dogmatically anticlerical revolutionaries in the early twentieth century. At this time, there was a "quantum leap" in the reach and scope of the state in Latin America (Whitehead 1994, 91). States were considerably expanding their social and territorial reach and starting to play much broader regulatory and welfare functions. Traditionally elitist governing structures were brought into routine contact with mass constituencies. This process thus gave conflicts with domestic rivals over social control a new scope and intensity.

[113] The postrevolutionary state elite, as explained in chapter 2, was dominated by rising middle-class men from Northern Mexico, who shared a more secular and developmentalist culture influenced by American and Protestant values. They also tended to be whiter than the rest of the Mexican population. For a discussion of the distinctive characteristics of these Northern elites and the reinforcement of anticlerical attitudes during the Revolution, see (Knight 1986, 203–8, 236, 500–504).

Historical accounts and direct evidence from speeches, elites' personal papers, and similar documents reveal that leading figures in the state-building coalition saw the relationship between Church and state as a zero-sum game, in which national progress and their very hold on power and survival were at stake. Beyond their own social identity and ideology, elite beliefs were also grounded in factual events, particularly Victoriano Huerta's overthrow of President Francisco I. Madero (1911-1913) in a coup seen as backed by the Church (Knight 1986, 203) and president-elect Álvaro Obregón's assassination by a Catholic militant in 1928.[114]

President Plutarco Elías Calles, a quintessential state-builder and architect of the National Revolutionary Party (PNR) that would mutate into the modern PRI, understood Mexican history in "apocalyptic terms: it involved a century-long struggle between a benighted clergy, the gift of *gachupín* [Spanish] colonialism, and progressive forces, now represented by the revolutionary state" (Knight 2010, 242). As explained previously in this study, religious persecution and anticlerical legislation under his rule sparked the massive Catholic 'Cristero' rebellion of 1926-1929.[115]

As the war proceeded and Obregón's assassination aggravated the political crisis, Calles orchestrated the elite settlement of 1928-1929 that gave birth to the PNR (Garrido 1982). His call for the articulation of revolutionary factions under a single party was tightly connected to the religious armed conflict and, more generally, the challenge posed by the Church and affiliated conservative interests, now clearly capable of mobilizing mass resistance. Calles considered the formation of an official party as necessary to stop strongman uprisings and revolutionary in-

[114] Obregón had served as president between 1920 and 1924 and had been re-elected for a new term at the time of his assassination. Other events fueled the belief among political elites that controlling Catholic opposition could be a matter of life and death. In 1931, for example, the governor of the state of Veracruz suffered an assassination attempt by militant Catholic groups in response to anticlerical measures. Other lower level state officials were also targets of violence, as the assassination of teachers during the 1930s illustrates.

[115] Calles's governed as president from 1924 to 1928 and informally until 1934-35, when he broke with President Lázaro Cárdenas. Three different presidents held power under Calles's control during the *Maximato* (1928-1934).

fighting, as most studies emphasize. However, he also saw the unification of revolutionary factions as necessary to protect the Revolution and a means to drive violent clerical opposition into institutional channels: it would serve to bring "groups representative of the reaction, even of the clerical reaction into the national representation" and take the fight "to the realm of ideas."[116]

The organizing committee of the PNR echoed the concern with encouraging conservative interests to adopt peaceful institutional strategies, openly calling for them to establish a partisan vehicle: "we want the reaction to be our enemy…it is necessary for conservatives to frankly raise the flag of their principles and fight against us, the revolutionaries."[117] Thus, while several previous attempts at unifying revolutionary leaders and factions under a single party had failed, this time religious counter-mobilization provided a definitive impetus for party formation.

The conventional wisdom about the emergence of the PNR is that revolutionary elites formed the party to regulate access to power among themselves, given constant violent in-fighting since the mid-1910s. This explanation is correct but also incomplete. It fails to account for the timing of party formation, and for why several previous explicit attempts to produce a similar elite settlement had failed, despite major uprisings and conflicts within the revolutionary camp. I argue that religious counter-mobilization played a definitive and perhaps underappreciated role. It is no coincidence that the PNR was finally formed in the crisis of the late 1920s, with mass religious resistance under way. As Knight argues, "the settlement and its institutional embodiment, the PNR, were seen as a dike against clericalism" (1992, 120).

This historical interpretation is consistent with both classic and more recent comparative studies that emphasize the role of deep political rivalries and even violence in party building

[116] The Constitution of 1917 banned confessional parties, which posed a legal impediment to the articulation of an openly religious party in the Christian Democratic tradition. Nevertheless, Catholic armed mobilization seems to have led revolutionary state elites to seriously contemplate the potential advantages of channeling conservative interests into a partisan outlet.

[117] Luis L. León, General Secretary of the PNR's Organizing Committee, cited in (Córdova 1994, 165).

(Levitsky et al. 2016; Lipset and Rokkan 1967). The argument advanced here, however, is that intense polarization around the religious cleavage not only stimulated governing elites to party-build, but also shaped decisions about where and how to *state*-build. In other words, my contention is that efforts to strengthen institutions in order to counter conservative opposition were not restricted to the realm of the party. They extended to the state itself, as elites strove to develop social regulatory capacities with particular intensity in areas of Church strength and Catholic resistance. Hence the development of state capacity is inseparable from cleavage politics.

Indeed, Catholic dissent and the influence of the Church remained salient concerns among state elites throughout the 1930s, when major expansions in state education, infrastructure, agrarian reform, and other public services took place. The regime negotiated an armistice with Church elites to put an end to the Cristero War in 1929—an agreement which rank-and-file Cristeros and lay Catholics opposed (J. Meyer 1976), but tensions continued as the conflict moved from the battlefield to the cultural and institutional realms. In a visit to the city of Guadalajara in 1934, a Catholic stronghold in the rebellious center-west, Calles famously declared that the regime needed to enter a new phase, "one that I would call the period of psychological revolution: we must enter and conquer the consciousness of the children, the consciousness of the youth, because they do, and must, belong to the Revolution...It would be a grave blunder, it would be criminal, for the men of the Revolution not to seize the youth from the claws of the clergy."[118]

Such attempts to reshape civil society from within were a crucial component of the state's project of "socialist" education and the intensification of agrarian reform under Cárdenas,

[118] "Palabras de Calles al Pueblo de Jalisco." *El Informador*. July 21, 1934. Available at http://hemeroteca.informador.com.mx/ (accessed April 26, 2017).

Mexico's other major state building figure. The anticlerical views of prior governments were now complemented by a stronger commitment to raising class-consciousness, a process in which the Church was seen as a major obstacle. Cárdenas's program of "socialist" education and agrarian reform was met by various forms of Catholic resistance, including a second yet weaker wave of insurgency that peaked in the mid-1930s (Fallaw 2013).

Throughout this crucial state-building period, then, state rhetoric and elites' own understanding of the political environment followed a dichotomous logic, captured in language that pitted class-conscious, rational, popular, and patriotic revolutionaries against fanaticism, backwardness, the landed oligarchy, and foreign interests. In the words of Portes Gil, president from 1928 to 1930, the Church represented "ignorance," "sloth," and the "moral and physical enslavement of the masses," and thus the Revolution had set as its primary objective "the extirpation of fanaticism," a precondition for progress in all spheres (1935, 4).[119]

Considering the importance that leaders in the governing coalition attributed to counteracting the influence of the Church and containing Catholic opposition, it is easy to see why these considerations guided policy implementation and investments in the state's ability to penetrate and transform society. We should thus observe patterns of state capacity development across territory reflecting the country's religious geography. The following sections present quantitative results concerning agrarian reform, education, and the construction of the civil registry that are consistent with this argument. I also discuss other evidence that state elites made decisions in each of these three specific policy domains prompted by the religious cleavage, which gives further credence to the argument that when political polarization around domestic

[119] Portes Gil presided over the end of the Cristero War as interim president, following Obregón assassination. As the Attorney General of the Republic from 1932 to 1934 he prepared criminal cases against—his words—"the evil Catholic clergy."

cleavage lines is high during state-building, stronger institutions for social regulation emerge where opposition to governing coalitions is more profound.

4.4 Catholic Insurgency and Agrarian Reform

A vast historical literature traces the Mexican postrevolutionary state's massive agrarian reform program to peasant revolt during the armed phase of the Revolution (1910-1917), and to the grievances produced by an expanding landholding class during the Porfirian dictatorship (1884-1910) more generally (Sanderson 1984; Tannenbaum 1966). More recent quantitative studies confirm the empirical link between revolutionary insurgency and the incidence of land redistribution across Mexico (Dell 2012). Although land reform satisfied well-founded claims for redistributive justice (Saffon Sanin 2015), scholars argue that several implementation features served to consolidate the authoritarian regime by subordinating the peasantry to the state, thus retarding democratic turnover (Albertus et al. 2016; Hamilton 1982). A consensus has also emerged that land reform—which reached more than half of the country's territory before its termination in 1992—hindered economic development in the long run, because notably incomplete property rights and collective ownership over grazing and forestry lands created inefficiencies in land use (Albertus et al. 2016; de Janvry, Gordillo, and Sadoulet 1997; de Janvry, Gonzalez-Navarro, and Sadoulet 2014; Dell 2012).

I build on these works but provide new insight into the politics of agrarian reform by focusing on the impact of religious contention *after* the Revolution, rather than previous peasant uprisings or other motivations for the redistribution of land in the form of *ejidos* (a territorial unit constituting an agrarian reform community). I also introduce more fine-grained, disaggregated historical data than has previously been available. Previous work has typically relied on state-

level data or convenient samples of municipalities. This study is among the first to analyze agrarian reform patterns at the municipality level for the country as a whole. I test the argument that given the *ejido*'s potential to bolster state social control and shift peasant allegiances away from perceived state enemies—most notably the Church and landed elites—and onto the central government, national state-builders allocated more land toward the construction of *ejidos* in municipalities that joined the insurgency during the Cristero War.

As the literature referenced above has argued, the institutional structure built around land reform made peasants dependent on the state for access to inputs, credits, and agricultural markets. Moreover, members of *ejidos* could not sell, rent, leave the land fallow, use it as a collateral, or inherit *ejido* rights beyond a single descendant (de Janvry, Gordillo, and Sadoulet 1997). In short, through agrarian reform the state turned itself into the landlord, granted incomplete rights, and became the final arbiter in land disputes. Implementing the program in a given area thus came with the ability to condition access to land, the most important asset in an agricultural economy, on social acquiescence and continuing political support. Communities received land, but in exchange the state co-opted peasant movements and local leaders, who were turned into *ejido* authorities and intermediaries between the local community and the state.

Several organizational characteristics further served to make the *ejido* an instrument for state surveillance and control at the local level. *Ejidos* were administered by a community council affiliated with a large national corporatist organization that formed the backbone of the official party. In practice, members of the *Comisariado Ejidal* (the *ejido*'s executive committee) performed several social regulatory functions beyond strictly agrarian affairs. *Ejido* authorities helped state agencies to implement policy in a range of domains, register citizens, and interpret local demands. They also maintained order in the countryside. As noted in the chapter on the

formation of Mexico's coercive apparatus (chapter 3), *ejido* members were frequently organized into semi-official rural militias that acted as local surrogates of the central state and collaborated with the army in local policing. To this day, the *defensas rurales* are formed exclusively by agrarian reform beneficiaries that provide intelligence to the armed forces.

Through the organization of the *ejido*, then, national state elites found a channel to penetrate rural communities at the grass-roots and develop a network of supporters, whose loyalty was premised on the state's ability to control access to land and necessary inputs. Beyond this linkage of material dependence, however, emphasized by Albertus et al. (2016) and others, central state-builders also conceived land reform as an instrument to induce social and cultural change in communities steeped in Catholic tradition, especially during Cárdenas's presidency. Radical state officials saw churches as hotbeds of state subversion and blamed Catholicism for providing an ideological coverage to landlord domination (Becker 1995).

Economics and culture appeared tightly linked, as the material power of landlords was considered to be inseparable from the cultural power of the Church. In the understanding of national state elites, this marriage was at the root of popular hostility to the state. Agrarian reform would not only cement state supremacy materially through the control over land, but also ideologically by turning Catholic peons into autonomous revolutionary peasants. In combination with socialist education, it would liberate them from economic and cultural oppression and thus legitimize the state's rule.

Taking this worldview into account is important because it clarifies how agrarian reform was conceived by the most radical members of the governing coalition as part of a broader struggle to undermine a clerical order, recast popular identities, and effect structural social

transformation.[120] It also reveals how deeply grounded was the state-building process in cleavage politics. As I have argued, partisan goals and aspirations in a highly polarized political environment, not a national or broadly shared project, were at the basis of decisions to state-build, what kind of state capacity, where, and for what ends.

In this sense, we can expect the Cristero War to have had a systematic impact on patterns of land reform during the 1930s, when redistribution peaked. During the war, the support of organized groups of armed *agraristas* (land reform petitioners and recipients) with local knowledge proved crucial for the army in combating the Cristeros (J. Meyer 1994). The promise of agrarian reform also served to cross-pressure Catholic peasants and thus fracture support for conservative coalitions of landlords, displaced local political elites, and clergy. Building institutions like the *ejido* that could cement the state's control over society, and ultimately erode the sources of popular opposition, was of special importance in formerly rebellious areas. The threat of further episodes of insurgency was real; even though the agreements of 1929 put a formal end to the war, systematic resistance persisted below the surface and produced violent outbreaks during the 'Second' Cristiada in the mid-1930s.

By compensating supporters in areas of Cristero resistance and pushing agrarian reform, then, the central state could attempt to maintain a modicum of social stability and even reshuffle identities and loyalties to its favor. The empirical analysis below shows that Cristero areas indeed experienced a disproportionate increase in land allocations throughout the 1930s, consistent with my argument that investments in institutions of social control vary positively with societal opposition to state-building coalitions.

[120] As Fallaw writes, "There was more than land at stake...Cárdenas always saw agrarian reform as inseparable from a larger social, cultural, and even moral transformation" (2001, 13).

4.4.1 Data

There are two main types of data in the analysis below. The first is my original data set on the incidence of insurgency during the Cristero War at the municipality level, which is the main independent variable and was coded as described in previous chapters. The second is a time-series cross-sectional database of yearly land reform allocations in each municipality, from the beginning of reform in 1916 to 1940. Data were obtained from the *Registro Agrario Nacional*.[121] I use this data to calculate the percentage of total surface area in the municipality distributed under the agrarian reform program every year.

In some specifications, I also use data to control for potentially relevant socioeconomic, geographic, and demographic characteristics of municipalities, as well as for levels of state capacity during the Porfirian dictatorship and patterns of insurgency during the Revolution (1910-1917). Geographic variables include the standard deviation of the altitude of all localities in a given municipality as a measure of the ruggedness of terrain, the geodesic distance between the municipal seat and the state capital, and the distance to Mexico City. Socioeconomic and demographic variables are the 1900 municipal population (logged), the percentage of the population working as peons in agriculture, and the percentage employed in industrial or commercial activities. All these variables were coded from the 1900 census.

To measure state capacity during the Pofiriato, I also calculate the percentage of people in the municipality employed as state officials in 1900, based on the census. Importantly, this variable captures the strength of the state across municipalities *before* the Revolution, and thus helps alleviate concerns that both the explanatory variable and the outcomes are predetermined by the development of the state in the nineteenth century. Finally, I also use the binary indicator

[121] The data were obtained through freedom of information requests.

of insurgency during the Revolution, whose construction has been explained in previous chapters.

4.4.2 Empirical strategy

I evaluate whether municipalities that experienced insurgency during the Cristero War experienced a differential increase in agrarian reform after the conflict. The main concern in estimating the effect of religious insurgency on land redistribution is that factors that explain the occurrence of insurgency or its absence may also drive patterns of land reform. To deal with this inferential challenge, I implement a difference-in-differences strategy with fixed effects at the municipal level.

This approach estimates the effect of the Cristero War based exclusively on a comparison of the change in land reform levels before and after the conflict in rebel (treatment) versus peaceful (control) municipalities. In doing so, it removes biases in the estimated effect that could result from permanent differences between the two types of municipalities, while the fixed effects remove all time-invariant characteristics of municipalities that could simultaneously correlate with insurgency status and drive land reform outcomes. The identifying assumption is that the evolution of land reform in peaceful municipalities provides a valid counterfactual for those that experienced insurgency, after conditioning on constant characteristics of municipalities—in other words, that agrarian reform in insurgent units after 1929 would have mirrored the trend observed in peaceful ones had the conflict not occurred.

An important decision in modeling the effects of the Cristero War is defining the relevant pre- and post-treatment periods for comparison. Data on land reform are available on a yearly basis, but years themselves are an arbitrary form of slicing the data. The process of allocating land under the agrarian reform program involved multiple steps and could take a long period to

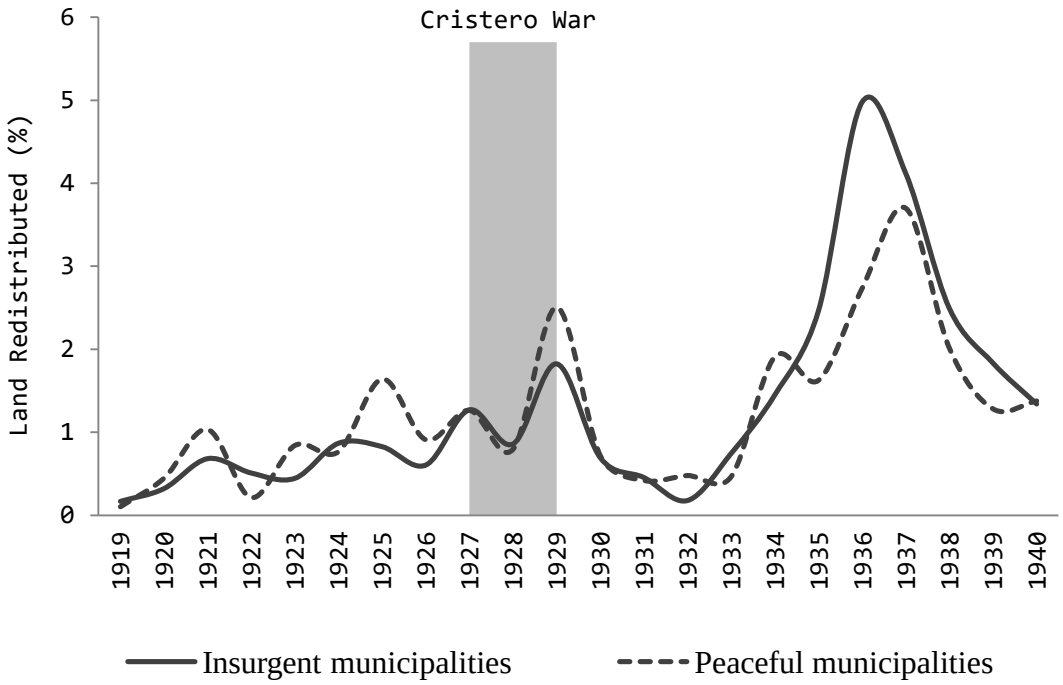
complete. Each case started with a petition filed by local residents and ended with a presidential decree, with state governments and the National Agrarian Commission playing roles in receiving petitions, mapping and measuring, granting provisional rights to land, studying the case, and presenting it to the president. In this sense, the effects of the Cristero Rebellion may not be observable immediately after the conflict, given that the data represent final allocation decisions.

More importantly, from an analytical perspective it is important to examine the Cárdenas presidency (1934-1940), when agrarian reform greatly accelerated. Evaluating the extent to which state elites employed land reform as a strategy to undercut resistance by political Catholics is of particular interest in this peak period of reform. It is well-documented that the religious cleavage remained salient under Cárdenas (Butler 2007; Fallaw 2013), and it is reasonable to expect that state elites were reacting to the religious armed conflict throughout the 1930s. For these reasons, in the analysis I examine land allocations until 1940.[122] The post-treatment period therefore goes from 1930 (the first year after the Cristero War) to 1940 (the end of Cárdenas's administration). To balance the periods, I set the baseline period to cover all allocations between 1919 and 1929. As a consequence, the reported difference-in-differences estimates reflect relative increases in land reform from a decade before the conflict to the decade after.

Figure 4.1 shows the average percentage of land redistributed by year in the period under study, comparing municipalities coded as insurgent during the Cristero War and non-rebel ones. The graph shows that agrarian reform increased considerably in all types of municipalities around the mid-1930s, but those that experienced insurgency during the Cristero Rebellion saw larger increases, on average. For the 1920s, in contrast, the graph displays similar or slightly lower levels of land reform in the latter group.

[122] Stopping in 1940 is also sensible given the consensus in the historiography that the Cárdenas presidency marks the end of the main formative period of the postrevolutionary state.

Figure 4.1. Average land redistribution in Mexican municipalities by insurgency status during the Cristero War, 1919-1940



Source: Own calculations based on official data from the National Agrarian Registry (RAN) and Cristero War dataset.

Table 4.1 summarizes this contrast with a simple difference-in-differences, based on the average percentage of land redistributed per year before and after the Cristero War in rebel and non-rebel municipalities. On average, municipalities that experienced insurgency had an extra increase in redistributed land of 0.54 percentage points per year in the period after the rebellion.

Table 4.1. Average land redistributed per year, before and after the Cristero War (% of total municipal surface area)

	Before (1919-1929)	After (1930-1940)	Difference
Cristero municipalities (treatment)	0.71	1.83	1.12*** (0.1)
Non-Cristero municipalities (control)	0.9	1.48	0.58*** (0.06)
Difference	-0.19* (0.09)	0.35*** (0.084)	**0.54*** (0.119)**

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

The results I present below more formally examine this variation. The base difference-in-differences estimating equation with fixed effects is given by:

$$land\ reform_{it} = \gamma_i + \gamma_1 cristero_i + \gamma_2 period_t + \gamma_3 (cristero_i \times period_t) + \beta \mathbf{X}'_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} ,$$

where $land\ reform_{it}$ is the percentage of total surface area redistributed under agrarian reform in municipality *i* in period *t*; γ_i is a municipality fixed effect; $cristero_i$ is a dummy variable equal to one if the municipality experienced insurgent activity between 1926 and 1929; $period_t$ is an indicator variable for the post-Cristero War period (1930-1940); $\mathbf{X}'_{it}$ is a vector of control variables employed in some specifications; and ε_{it} is the error term. The difference-in-differences estimate is given by γ_3, which reflects the differential increase in land reform in Cristero municipalities after the conflict, relative to those that remained peaceful. I estimate the equation above via OLS and cluster the standard errors at the municipality level to account for correlation within units over time.

4.4.3 Results

Column 1 in Table 4.2 reports results for the baseline difference-in-differences specification with municipality fixed effects and no additional controls. To further address potential concerns about omitted variable bias, columns 2 to 4 add a range of controls. Since yearly measures of the control variables are not available, I interact them with the period dummy that equals one for the post-Cristero period. This allows me to rule out the possibility that the differential increase in land reform in Cristero municipalities that I attribute to the religious conflict is in fact driven by these variables impacting agrarian reform differently from the 1920s to 1930s for reasons unrelated to the war.

The results in Table 4.2 lend support to the argument that state elites made disproportionate use of agrarian reform—an instrument to enhance social control—in municipalities that harbored insurgents during the Cristero War. Under the assumption that trends in land reform in peaceful and rebel municipalities would have mirrored each other had the conflict not occurred,[123] the baseline coefficient in column 1 suggests that the rebellion added an extra 0.5 points to the percentage of land redistributed in a municipality per year throughout the 1930s. Considering the important long-run political, economic, and social consequences that scholars have associated with agrarian reform in Mexico (e.g. Albertus et al. 2016), this is a meaningful result.

[123] Also known as the "parallel trends assumption."

Table 4.2. Difference-in-differences estimates of the effect of the Cristero War on agrarian reform, 1919-1940

	Dependent variable: % redistributed land			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Cristero War × period	0.495***	0.499***	0.484***	0.273*
	(0.110)	(0.110)	(0.112)	(0.115)
Period	0.488***	0.136	0.110	-2.329***
	(0.060)	(0.133)	(0.136)	(0.360)
Distance to state capital × period		0.293***	0.257***	0.289***
		(0.075)	(0.075)	(0.078)
Distance to Mex City × period		-0.001	-0.001	-0.004
		(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.018)
Terrain ruggedness × period		0.359	0.261	0.090
		(0.306)	(0.308)	(0.307)
% state officials 1900 × period			0.219	-0.084
			(0.229)	(0.242)
Revolution insurgency × period			0.204†	0.040
			(0.108)	(0.112)
% industry or commerce 1900 × period				0.034
				(0.046)
% peons 1900 × period				-0.011*
				(0.005)
Log pop 1900 × period				0.341***
				(0.047)
Constant	0.900***	0.905***	0.721***	0.726***
	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Municipality fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	43,811	43,481	41,696	40,926

Parentheses contain standard errors adjusted for clustering at the municipality level.
† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

For my purposes, given that the *ejido* was one of the principal tools to elicit compliance and constrain civil society from within, the results confirm that differences in the state's capacity for social regulation across territory may indeed emerge from elite decisions during periods of state-building marked by intense political polarization. In particular, elites have incentives to develop stronger institutions of social control where groups outside the governing coalition threaten and resist the emerging state. Independent of the initial motivations, these institutional

differences may in turn have enduring consequences of their own, as studies of the Mexican agrarian reform have shown.

4.5 The Cleavage Politics of Mass Schooling and Nation-making

The spread of mass public education is another critical setting to examine the processes of interest in this chapter—namely, how intense polarization between state-building coalitions and domestic opponents shapes the development of social regulatory institutions across territory. Historically, the provision of mass schooling marked a fundamental transformation in the uses of public power and the weight of the state in society. Large swaths of the population first came into direct and repeated contact with states through the public school. Mass education systems also permitted the cultivation of norms of compliance and national identities, thus making the nation-state truly national. The expansion of basic education is therefore one of the key processes in the rise of "infrastructurally" powerful states (Mann 2012), capable of deeply penetrating everyday life, standardizing society, and shaping attitudes and behavior.

Latin American states were late arrivers to this process, relative to the developed world (Engerman, Sokoloff, and Mariscal 2012). In Mexico, school provision and literacy rates increased considerably during the Porfirian dictatorship (Soifer 2015; Vaughan 1982), but access to the education system remained predominantly an elite prerogative. As in the rest of the region, the turning point came in the twentieth century. According to census data, less than 28% of the adult population could read or write on the verge of the Revolution in 1910; by 1950, the literate population had increased to 57%, for the first time outnumbering illiterates. The transformation of a predominantly agrarian and illiterate society was a product of postrevolutionary state-building.

Existing arguments about the expansion of education, focusing on the national level, emphasize the role of inclusive political institutions and democratization in promoting broad-based investments in this and other public goods (Ansell 2010; Lindert 2004; Stasavage 2005). Others suggest that high levels of socioeconomic inequality depressed investments in public education in Latin America (Engerman, Sokoloff, and Mariscal 2012). However, these arguments cannot account for the spread of education in an overarching authoritarian context, or for substantial within-country differences in the prevalence and pace of the expansion of basic schooling.

I instead build upon another classic body of literature that emphasizes states' historical use of public education as a tool to establish social control, build national cohesion, and induce changes in mass behavior and beliefs (Gellner 1983; Harp 1998; E. Weber 1976). Although many of these works emphasize interstate pressures and international imitation as triggers for nation-building projects (Darden and Mylonas 2016; J. W. Meyer, Ramirez, and Soysal 1992), their approach to education can be recast to illuminate the sub-nationally uneven development of mass schooling. If states, especially in revolutionary contexts, exploit public education as an instrument of control and social engineering, we can expect educational investments across territory to respond to the structure of domestic conflict separating the state coalition from opposing groups. In particular, state elites are likely to rely on their perceptions of internal threat as well as their conceptions of the kind of reform that is most needed in the social realm—in short, what sectors of society must be brought under state control and transformed.

In the Mexican case, the religious cleavage structured state-builders' choices in this domain during the crucial postrevolutionary period, with important consequences for the breadth and pace of access to schooling and for long-run outcomes. There is a rich comparative literature

on the salient role of religion in the politics of mass education in Western Europe (Ansell and Lindvall 2013; Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Morgan 2002), but few empirical works have systematically examined the effect of the clerical-anticlerical cleavage on educational outcomes in Latin America. In Mexico, the overriding concern among leading state-builders with "extirpating fanaticism" and overcoming resistance from political Catholics led them to concentrate state effort in areas of historical Church strength, thus leading to faster improvements in education and leaving a positive institutional legacy. The empirical analysis below will show that this argument can be supported statistically using highly disaggregated, unexploited historical data. Before, however, it is worth substantiating it with an examination of the postrevolutionary education system under the lens of this political and cultural struggle.

It is well known that the expansion of primary education was one of the pillars of the postrevolutionary project, central to nation-state building in both the institutional and the less tangible cultural-ideological domain. From either of these two perspectives, which I discuss in turn, it is possible to appreciate how state elites built the mass education system in direct opposition to Catholicism and the Church. On the basis of this explicit commitment to undermining clerical influence, it can be inferred that investments in educational institutions across territory unfolded along religious cleavage lines, as elites calculated that more intense efforts were needed where the Church's social power was greatest.

First, establishing social control requires physical presence, and in this concrete dimension the capabilities of the education bureaucracy were unparalleled. Established in 1921 at the very onset of state-building, the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) coordinated the most numerous and far-flung of the state's civilian bureaucracies. Teachers acquired a fundamental role as the main, and often the only, permanent agents of the national state in local

communities. This single fact illustrates the importance of schooling as the channel to penetrate territory and establish the state's authority.

But the structuring force of Mexico's religious cleavage is best appreciated in the all-embracing role that teachers were assigned to play in local communities. Indeed, during this formative stage statesmen were as invested in the functions of teachers outside the classroom as within them. Put bluntly, national elites expected the school teacher to become the secular alternative to the local priest, and ultimately replace him as the dominant figure of authority and agent of social integration and political socialization. Thus teachers were expected to perform a series of social regulatory tasks that mirrored those of clerics: they would mediate in local disputes, give advice to community members, organize the community to engage in collective endeavors, and connect it with the outside world. Describing his image of the ideal rural community, the head of the SEP emphasized the importance of building schoolhouses in, or at least near, Church grounds (Raby 1974, 15–16). In extreme cases, the replacement was coercively enforced, as in the state of Tabasco where a Jacobinist governor engaged in repression against Catholic groups, banned priests from the state, and turned church buildings into "rationalist" schools (Martínez Assad 1979).

Moreover, teachers served as a link between the village and other state agencies. They collaborated with local residents in bureaucratic and legal activities demanding literacy and numeracy skills, like petitioning for land and judicial procedures. Conversely, they acted as agents of the central state by implementing policy in several domains, promoting agrarian reform, and providing knowledge and legibility. The SEP archives, for example, contain teachers' responses to exhaustive questionnaires about the communities they served, including questions about geographical conditions, available infrastructure, economic activity, health

outcomes, religion, and local customs and "superstitions."[124] To help pacify mobilized communities and guarantee their own personal safety, teachers were also granted the right to carry arms.

Beyond teachers' role in consolidating state social control in detriment of the Church in these concrete ways, leading figures in the state coalition perceived secular primary schooling as the ultimate vehicle for socio-cultural change, legitimation, and citizen formation. In this domain, too, the set of practices and beliefs associated with Catholic culture constituted the relevant counterpoint. As historian Alan Knight has argued, the revolutionary myth was crafted quite late after military victory, and to a large extent as a response to mass Catholic resistance (2010). The various Mexican revolutionary factions lacked the partisan and ideological coherence of the Marxist revolutions of the rest of the twentieth century, and thus a consistent historical narrative with iconic figures and tenets was slow in the making. Anticlericalism, however, was a shared principle among key state elites, and of all social groups political Catholics proved the most recalcitrant, mounting the armed challenge of the late 1920s. Accordingly, state attempts at social and cultural transformation emphasized secularization.

As the regime reached its most radical phase in the 1930s, social engineers gave new impulse to the state's schooling project. Under "socialist" education, militant teachers were expected to build a new type of class-conscious secular citizen (Lerner 1979; Lewis 2005; Vaughan 1994, 1997). Education and cultural policy-makers in the center designed patriotic festivals to replace religious festivities (Bantjes 1997), supplied standardized textbooks (Loyo 1984), and reformed school curricula to build national cohesion and cultivate citizens' allegiance to the revolutionary state. Teachers would inculcate new habits, values, and beliefs among the

[124] Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Fondo Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP), Serie Dirección General de Educación Primaria en los Estados y Territorios, 37.33.1 Varios Estados. "Fichas de Investigación del Medio Geográfico, Económico y Social." 1945.

benighted peasantry, making them literate, loyal, and hard-working. Although the regime made concessions regarding the enforcement of anticlerical legislation after the Cristero War, it is nevertheless clear that the religious cleavage continued to shape state and nation-building during this decisive period. The new revolutionary citizen was modeled on the basis of anti-Catholic prejudice. I argue that institutional investments followed a similar pattern.

Indeed, the religious cleavage structured the state's educational undertakings to the point that the most radical officials and teachers displayed a missionary zeal, implementing literacy and hygiene campaigns under the banner of "cultural missions" and articulating their goals in quasi-religious language of "redemption" and "conversion" (Becker 1995). The anticlerical thrust behind the construction of the education system in the 1920s and 1930s is captured in Cárdenas's own personal papers: Catholic clergy, he wrote, "must be considered as foreigners and pernicious foreigners, because they hinder the progress of peoples." The dike against their influence had to be the school, which needed to "inculcate the ideology of the Mexican Revolution" to "liberate Mexico from the fanaticism that has powerfully served exploiters to sink the people into misery and ignorance" (Cárdenas 1972, 297).

The ruling coalition's cultural and nation-making project thus had a concrete institutional foundation in the primary school, and an agent in the school teacher. Correspondingly, both became targets of Catholic resistance. In the 1930s, the state's intense efforts in religious areas generated a strong backlash that included the torching of schools, the expulsion and assassination of teachers (Raby 1974), insurrections led by former Cristeros, and boycotting campaigns coordinated by clergy and lay Catholic organizations (Bantjes 1998; Fallaw 2013).

These responses contributed to a conservative turn in state policy. By the 1940s, postrevolutionary governments had backed down from their radical secularizing attempts and

reached a *modus vivendi* with the Church. The massive expansion of schooling during the first decades after the Revolution was successful in important respects. It boosted enrollment and literacy, helped disseminate a revolutionary myth, and lay the foundations of a more robust and long-lasting popular nationalism than in other countries in Latin America (vom Hau 2008). However, the image of society promoted by the most radical social engineers in the state-building coalition failed to materialize. Cultural historians point to a contentious negotiation between state and local societies, whereby the latter selectively took advantage of aspects of the education project they desired, like the acquisition of literacy skills, and ultimately granted basic compliance in exchange for the moderation of state attempts at social engineering (Rockwell 1994; Vaughan 1997).

Even as later governments renounced efforts at radical secularization and social transformation, however, they continued to work upon the educational infrastructure laid and expanded during the first decades of postrevolutionary nation-state building. During this formative period, state elites resorted to education to bring restive sectors of the population under control and induce consent. Below, I use systematic historical data to further support the argument that such efforts to establish social control in the context of a sharp religious cleavage may have led to heavier institutional investments in more clerical areas.

4.5.1 Data

To evaluate the impact of the religious cleavage on educational outcomes, I introduce a new measure of Church strength that consists in the number of Catholic clergy per 1,000 citizens at the municipality level, which I coded using the 1900 census.[125] This measure has important advantages for my purposes because it reflects the depth of the Church's roots across Mexico

[125] To the best of my knowledge, this is the first empirical study to have compiled and made use of these data.

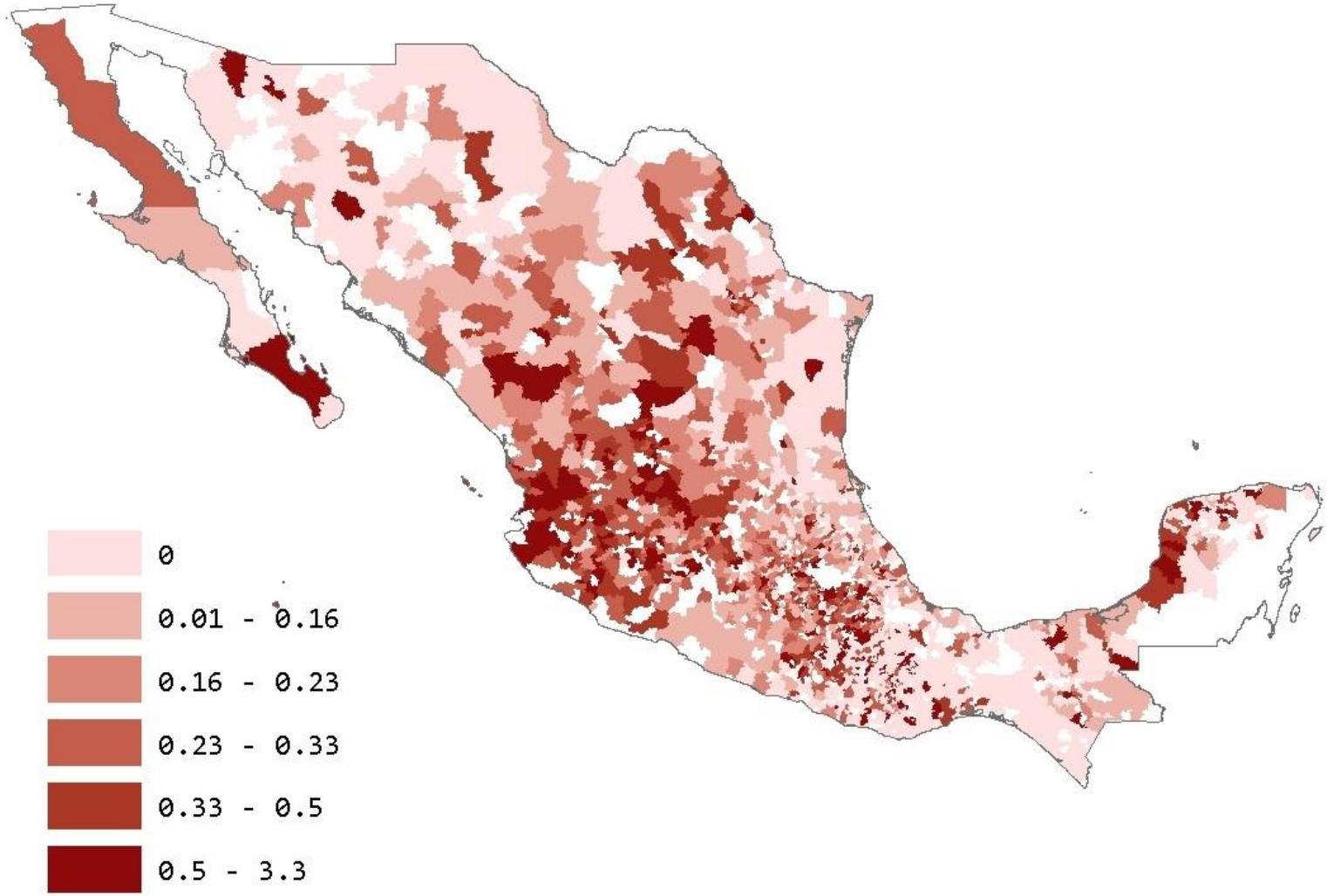
before the Revolution in 1910 and the implementation of anticlerical or educational policy in the period under study. In other words, it is the best available systematic measure of the religious geography at the time when the revolutionary coalition took command of the state. Disaggregated data on Church presence is not available for later periods, and given state persecution and restrictions on the number of clergy, they would fail to capture the concept of interest (Church strength). Wilkie, for example, reports that by 1935 only 322 priests were permitted by law to serve in the country (1970).

A map depicting this variable appears below as Figure 4.2. As the map clearly shows, the Church was historically stronger in the center-west, which would become the Cristero heartland in the 1920s. Other areas in central and south-western Mexico also had high Church presence, while northern and eastern states were relatively underserved.

In contrast to the results presented below, those using insurgency during the Cristero War as the key independent variable were inconclusive.[126] One possibility is that the measure of clergy relative to population is more sensitive to municipal variation than my dummy variable for religious insurgency between 1926-1929. More importantly, given the ideological commitment of state elites outlined above, in the specific case of education it is likely that state-building decisions responded to the strength of the Church more than to violent religious conflict *per se*.

[126] The relationships were in the expected direction but imprecisely estimated.

Figure 4.2. Catholic priests per 1,000 people in Mexican municipalities (1900)



Note: For clarity, municipal boundaries are not shown. The data are grouped in quintiles. Municipalities formed after 1900 appear in white.

Thus, whereas the religious contention as captured by the Cristero War was decisive in driving patterns of fiscal and coercive capacity or land reform, as I have shown, here the institutional strength of the Church demonstrates to be systematically important for educational outcomes. An important implication of the findings in this section is that the impact of the religious cleavage on state capacity outcomes is not reducible to a legacy of civil war. I discuss this in detail in the conclusion.

As a robustness check, I replicate all models using another measure of Church strength that takes into account territorial penetration—the number of churches per 1,000 km^2. This variable is available for a smaller sample of municipalities than the number of priests, but it confirms that the observed associations are robust to different ways of measuring the concept of interest. Results for these models appear in Table 4.5 in the Appendix.

To measure the spread of mass primary education, I use municipality-level data on literacy from the 1930 and the 1950 censuses, relative to total population. The years between 1930 and 1950 bracket a period when much of the heavy lifting in expanding school infrastructure and realizing mass literacy was achieved. As referenced above, the percentage of the adult Mexican population that could read and write doubled within these two decades. It is also a reasonable time period to observe effects of educational investments made during the critical state-building stage.

Literacy is a good window into the relationship of interest given the belief among anticlerical state-builders that it was readily emancipatory and secularizing. However, I complement the analysis of changes in literacy with cross-sectional data on school enrollment rates for 1950, to ensure my results are robust to the use of alternative measures.

To examine the presence of long-run effects, I use data on average years of schooling of the municipal population in 2005, obtained from the national statistics agency (INEGI). All additional variables have been described in other parts of this study, except a measure of state capacity specific to education during the Porfiriato. This variable is measured as the number of school teachers per 1,000 people in the municipality in 1900, coded from the census. It complements my other indicators of pre-existing state capacity, to minimize concerns about endogeneity.

4.5.2 Empirical strategy

Given that my interest is on evaluating whether municipalities where the Church was more implanted experienced relatively stronger state investments in education, I model *change* in the literacy rate between 1930 and 1950, rather than absolute levels of literacy. This is done by specifying the dependent variable as a first-difference between the two data points, which ensures that the results are not driven by different baseline conditions. The results of these models are thus interpreted as the relationship between a predictor variable and the size of the increase in literacy within these two crucial decades.

In some specifications, I add a range of carefully selected controls that could be correlated with the depth of Church presence in 1900 and simultaneously drive the differential increase in literacy across municipalities. The most important concerns in this respect are first, that the strength of the Church before the Revolution was likely correlated with strength of the state; and second, that the literacy rate may have increased more in municipalities that already had higher state capacity in education since the Porfiriato. I therefore include as covariates two measures of state strength across municipalities, both of them contemporaneous to the measure of Church strength and one specific to educational capacity: the number of public employees per

capita, and the number of teachers per capita in 1900. While I cannot affirm these variables fully account for the potential association between deeper historical patterns of state capacity and both Church strength and the pace of future educational improvements, their inclusion gives confidence that no obvious endogeneity stems from this source.

I also control for observable geographic characteristics, an indicator variable for municipalities that comprise state capital cities, and several variables that capture the demographic and socioeconomic structure of municipalities. These include population density, (log) population size, the percentage of the population working as peons in agriculture, and the percentage employed in commercial or industrial activities, all in 1900. The socioeconomic measures are important because numerous authors have argued that market forces drive the expansion of education (Gellner 1983), and they could also correlate with the density of Church presence. Relatedly, these variables capture differences in development and societal demand for literacy and numeracy skills. In some models I also control for the population growth rate between 1930 and 1950, to account for different population pressures on the education system across municipalities. Finally, all specifications include state fixed effects to remove all factors common to municipalities within a given state that could confound the relationship of interest.

These controls are also included in two cross-sectional models where I change the dependent variable to be the school enrollment rate in 1950; and second, the average years of schooling in 2005. The estimation method for all models is OLS.

4.5.3 Results

Table 4.3 presents results for the relationship between the historical strength of the Church and educational outcomes after Mexico's anticlerical Revolution. Overall, there is a positive association between the intensity of Church presence in 1900 and measures of education

that reflect institutional investments by the postrevolutionary state-building coalition. This result is consistent across measures of investments in education, and there is suggestive evidence of long-run effects. The results in the chapter Appendix, using the number of churches per square kilometers to capture Church strength, are generally consistent with those presented in Table 4.3.

Columns 1 to 3 report results using the change in the literacy rate between 1930 and 1950 as the dependent variable, starting with a baseline specification that only includes state fixed effects and progressively adding controls. All models suggest that a more robust historical Church presence accelerated the expansion of literacy and public primary schooling during postrevolutionary state-building. Based on the coefficient in column 3 and exploiting exclusively within-state variation, a one standard deviation increase in the number of Catholic priests per 1,000 in 1900 in a municipality is associated with an additional increase in the literacy rate of 0.4 percentage points between 1930 and 1950.[127] More densely populated municipalities and those with more commercialized economies in 1900 also experienced more pronounced increases in literacy, while rough terrain appears to have hindered state efforts in education.

This result is consistent with anticlerical state-builders making relatively stronger investments in educational institutions in areas of Church strength, in order to establish social control. Similar conclusions emerge from column 4. Municipalities with stronger Church presence at the beginning of the twentieth century are associated with higher school enrollment rates in 1950. One additional priest per 1,000 people is linked with an increase of 0.5 points in the percentage of children enrolled in school. The coefficient is larger than the one on the historical number of teachers, which in this case is also positively associated with the outcome variable.

[127] Notice that my measures of literacy are relative to total, not the adult municipal population.

Table 4.3. Linear models of historical Church strength and educational outcomes, 1930-2005

	DV: Δ in literacy rate (1950-1930)			DV: School enrollment (1950)	DV: Average schooling (2005)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Catholic priests per 1,000 (1900)	2.042***	1.756***	1.375**	0.495*	0.159*
	(0.387)	(0.410)	(0.484)	(0.194)	(0.071)
Terrain roughness		-0.010***	-0.010***	-0.002**	-0.002***
		(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.000)
Distance to Mexico City		-0.004	-0.004	-0.003	0.001
		(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Distance to state capital		-0.025†	-0.024†	-0.005†	-0.002
		(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.003)	(0.002)
State capital (dummy)		-3.720†	-4.286**	-1.040*	1.244***
		(1.871)	(1.397)	(0.437)	(0.271)
% pop industry & commerce (1900)			0.399*	0.226*	0.193***
			(0.162)	(0.090)	(0.042)
% peons (1900)			-0.009	-0.023**	-0.012**
			(0.017)	(0.008)	(0.004)
Teachers per 1,000 (1900)			-0.002	0.356***	0.203**
			(0.274)	(0.082)	(0.056)
State officials per 1,000 (1900)			-0.022	0.010	0.055***
			(0.100)	(0.048)	(0.012)
Log population (1900)			-0.163	-0.097	0.205**
			(0.653)	(0.197)	(0.056)
Population density (1900)			0.008***	0.002	0.005***
			(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Population growth rate (1930-50)			0.003	-0.003†	
			(0.006)	(0.002)	
Constant	15.705***	21.816***	22.779**	9.729***	4.228***
	(0.073)	(2.549)	(7.685)	(2.644)	(0.511)
State fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
N	1,928	1,913	1,876	1,876	1,895

Parentheses contain robust standard errors clustered at the state level.
† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Finally, column 5 suggests that state institutional investments during this period of educational expansion may have indeed produced long-run effects. Exploiting within-state variation, the results indicate that the population in municipalities where the Church had deeper roots before the Revolution have more years of schooling on average in recent times, compared to the population in municipalities in the same state but that had a shallower clerical presence. Every unit increase in the number of priests per capita is associated with 0.16 additional years in the average schooling rate. This is consistent with findings for other regions of the world that historical state-building junctures, when basic state structures are created, can produce initial differences in organizational capacity and educational infrastructure that inertially persist (e.g. Huillery 2009; Mattingly 2017).

The gains in education observed in municipalities where the Catholic Church had been stronger historically, during and after a period of state-building commanded by an anticlerical coalition, suggest that cleavage-based considerations about social control indeed shaped the expansion of mass schooling. Taken together with the results on agrarian reform, these patterns support the broader argument that when states emerge in a context of acute domestic polarization, investments in state institutions to penetrate and constrain society reflect the underlying lines of conflict. This is an important historical source of unevenness in state capacity.

The results are also consistent with the observation made by scholars in the comparative-historical institutional tradition that the origins of institutions may have little to do with their subsequent effects (Pierson 2004; Ziblatt 2006). It is well-known that differences in educational attainment and the provision of mass public education have important consequences for economic growth and human development. Yet investments in education may be guided by

political concerns with constraining opposition to the state and legitimizing its rule. In the case of Mexico, efforts by an anticlerical state-building coalition to overcome Catholic resistance and indoctrinate the masses where the Church held more sway indeed seem to help explain how educational institutions evolved.

4.6 The Extension of the Civil Registry

This section analyzes how societal resistance along the religious cleavage shaped the extension of the civil registry, another basic institution through which the postrevolutionary Mexican state secured a foothold in society. Registering citizens and compiling basic demographic and vital statistics are defining functions of modern states, whose ability to govern directly, uniformly, and bureaucratically rests on standardization and "legibility" (Scott 1998). Historically, citizen registration and the sanctioning of relevant events in the lives of ordinary people were also crucial arenas in the struggle between church and state for social control.[128] The now seemingly mundane institution of the civil registry is thus a window into how the conflicts between insiders and outsiders to state-building coalitions—in this case of a religious nature—shape investments in state institutions.

In Mexico, already by the mid-nineteenth century Liberal governments had advanced civil laws that turned social relations and personal life events into the state's business. Formally, all births, deaths, marriages, and divorces required the state's recognition, and as in other domains the state's actual capacity to enforce these regulations grew during the Porfirian dictatorship. Yet as in education, the "massification" of the civil registry came in the aftermath of the Revolution.

[128] Latin American countries imported the Napoleonic civil code, the landmark document in the expansion of state control over marriage, the registration of births and deaths, and the like, in detriment of clerical authority.

Precise data for the pre-revolutionary period are not available, but figures derived from an archival source indicate that in 1922, at the onset of state reconstruction, only 3.7 marriages and 31 births per 1,000 people were registered in the civil registry.[129] The same source reports increases to 6.3 and 40 after fifteen years. As further evidence of the consolidation of the state's authority in this domain in the decades after the Revolution, the 1930 census—the first data point available—indicates that 48% of all people living in couples did so under a marriage sanctioned by civil authorities, a figure that increased to 61% in 1940 and 68% in 1950.[130]

Indeed, strengthening the state's role as the regulator and recorder of basic life events occupied an important position in the agenda of Mexican state-builders, as was the case in other regimes born out of revolutions (Diamant 2001). In the early 1930s, as Church and state reached the agreement to end the Cristero War, new regulations were introduced reinforcing the prohibition on clergy from celebrating marriages and baptisms without prior civil registration, as well as linking school enrollment and other services to civil registration. The institutional Church, as part of the post-war *modus vivendi*, became more willing to complement religious ceremony with the civil certificate (Boylan 2007, 178). By 1936, over three thousand offices were implementing registration procedures in some 2,350 municipalities.[131]

From a cultural-ideational perspective, this represented yet another intervention to undermine clerical authority and form national citizens: individuals would internalize the norm that the main life events of all persons required the state's formal recognition. But accurate demographic statistics and the capacity to identify citizens were also vital for the practical

[129] Archivo General de la Nación, Fondo SEP, Oficina de Estadística Escolar/Dirección General de Estadística, caja 9268. Campañas Educativas. Folleto "Qué es el Estado Civil y por qué se hacen estadísticas de nacimientos, matrimonios, divorcios, defunciones y nacidomuertos."
[130] I calculate the total number of people living in couple as the sum of people in free union, in marriages sanctioned only by the Church, only by the state, and by both Church and state. I use the two latter categories to calculate the number of people with state-sanctioned marriages.
[131] See note 129 above for source. Mayors were in charge of civil registration functions in most municipalities.

purposes of constraining mobilization and conducting the routine tasks of government and administration. The state thus actively disseminated information about the benefits of civil registration. A brochure circulated in 1938 through public schools warned that major inconveniences could emerge in the event that a crime was committed and the person lacked a birth certificate to prove her identity, and hence her innocence. A birth certificate was also the ideal way to prove one's identity in order to be eligible for land allocations, and necessary to attend school and inherit property. Similarly, the brochure explained that women could only hold their husbands to their legal obligations with a civil marriage certificate, while properly determining the number of schools or teachers required accurate demographic statistics.[132]

Catholic hostility to the state, materializing in civil war during the *Cristiada* but continuing throughout the 1930s, altered the course and intensity of state-building across territory in several spheres, as I have shown. Given the civil registry's central importance for the infrastructural regulation of society, in this domain state elites also prioritized clerical and insurgent areas, where their legitimacy and social control capabilities had proven to be more tenuous. Through the expansion of the registry, the state could deepen its presence and gain basic knowledge about society, in order to control Catholic mass resistance and prevent further major insurgent outbreaks.

State intent, of course, may not translate into actual outcomes, as stressed above with regard to the attempts at secularization through public schooling. However, governments raised the probability of success for their strategically distributed registration efforts by linking registration to rights and services. Incorporation into state records could thus carry important

[132] See note 129 above for source.

benefits for groups hostile to the state. Below, I use historical data to examine the effects of the religious cleavage on the extension of institutions of registration in the context of state-building.

4.6.1 Data

Despite Scott's influential work on registration and legibility as the distinctive characteristics of rule by modern states (1998), few studies have used systematic civil registry data to examine how rulers expand these capacities. Following Diamant's qualitative study of postrevolutionary China, I use civil marriage registration as a window into the development of these administrative capabilities (2001). Starting in 1930, it is possible to calculate the proportion of people married by civil and/or religious ceremony in each municipality using the census. I coded these data for 1930 and 1940, which allows me to capture the pace of increase across municipalities in the decade of state consolidation after the Cristero War.

As mentioned, civil marriage increased by some 13 percentage points at the national level from 1930 to 1940, for the first time reaching a clear majority of couples. To ease the process of data collection, however, the indicator I employ at the municipality level is simply the percentage of people—rather than couples—that declared to be married by civil ceremony, alone or in conjunction with a religious ceremony.[133]

As in the section on agrarian reform above, I report results using the incidence of insurgency during the Cristero War as the explanatory variable. In this case, the results are robust to using the number of priests per capita before the Revolution to capture the spatial dynamics of the clerical-anticlerical cleavage. Because registration is key to maintaining order and deterring insurgency in infrastructural ways, which possibly combined with state elites' interest in undermining the Church to determine the allocation of institutional effort, I opt for modeling

[133] Data were hand-coded for a large number of municipalities using census reports.

registration outcomes as a function of the Cristero War in the statistical analysis. I return to these different ways of measuring the underlying cleavage in the conclusion.

Other historical variables used in the analysis to deal with potential issues of selection and confounding have been described previously in this study.

4.6.2 Empirical strategy

I estimate models of the *change* in the percentage of the population married by civil ceremony between 1930 and 1940, using OLS. As in the case of literacy above, by modeling change instead of absolute levels I am able to assess the effect of religious opposition on the extension of registering institutions throughout the 1930s, after taking into account baseline differences across municipalities. All model specifications include state fixed effects to account for all state-level factors potentially explaining both municipalities' selection into the Cristero War and the pace of increase in civil registration. In addition, I evaluate whether the results are robust to considering differences in state administrative capacity prior to the Revolution, the socioeconomic and demographic structure of municipalities at the time of the Cristero War, and geographic characteristics.

4.6.3 Results

Table 4.4 presents results for three model specifications. The main finding is that civil marriage registration increased more pronouncedly from 1930 to 1940—the decade of consolidation of the postrevolutionary state—in municipalities that experienced rebellion during the Cristero War. The coefficient in the fully specified model shown in column 3 indicates that on average, the percentage of the total municipal population that was married by civil ceremony increased by 0.37 additional points throughout the 1930s in rebel municipalities, compared to

those that remained peaceful within the same state. As a reference, the average increase across all municipalities was approximately 5 percentage points. The results also indicate that the expansion of registration capabilities tended to be weaker as distance from state capitals increased. Other variables do not reach statistical significance at conventional levels.

The picture that emerges from a systematic analysis of this basic social regulatory institution is thus consistent with the general argument advanced in this chapter, as well as with the empirical patterns uncovered in the sections on agrarian reform and education. Investments in institutions of social control were guided by religious contention and the governing coalition's anticlerical purposes. With the expansion of the civil registry, the state attempted to make society more legible, and hence controllable. While *apparently* trivial, civil marriage registration brought the power of the state into the sphere of family life and social relations. The results in this section suggest that political motivations anchored in salient domestic cleavages can be a strong determinant of the intensity of elite efforts to build registration and administrative capabilities across a country's territory. The findings thus shed further light into the forces driving the development of state institutions associated with modern and effective governance.

Table 4.4. Linear models of Cristero War insurgency and the civil registry, 1930-1940

	Dependent variable: Δ civil marriage registration (1940-1930)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Cristero War insurgency (1926-1929)	0.359*	0.332†	0.368*
	(0.143)	(0.165)	(0.167)
Terrain roughness		-0.002	-0.002
		(0.001)	(0.001)
Distance to Mexico City		0.000	0.001
		(0.002)	(0.002)
Distance to state capital		-0.007†	-0.007*
		(0.003)	(0.003)
State capital (dummy)		-0.452	-0.305
		(0.451)	(0.676)
% peons (1900)			-0.008
			(0.012)
Teachers per 1,000 (1900)			-0.248
			(0.213)
State officials per 1,000 (1900)			0.008
			(0.035)
Revolution insurgency (1910-1917)			-0.232
			(0.361)
% pop in industry & commerce (1930)			-0.034
			(0.058)
Log population (1930)			0.131
			(0.187)
Population density (1930)			0.002
			(0.002)
Population growth rate (1930-1940)			-0.008
			(0.006)
% rural population (1930)			-0.001
			(0.007)
Constant	4.886***	5.764***	5.115†
	(0.035)	(0.799)	(2.516)
State fixed effects	YES	YES	YES
N	2,232	2,172	1,878

Parentheses contain robust standard errors clustered at the state level.
† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the uneven spread of state institutions of social control across territory in the context of postrevolutionary Mexico. During this period, several institutions today indissolubly linked with state governance reached, for the first time, the mass of ordinary people. This process of accelerated state-building took place amid high levels of political polarization along a religious cleavage, with the state itself engaging in a sharp and at times violent conflict over the influence of Catholicism on citizens' attitudes, identities, and behaviors. I have shown that this domestic fracture had a decisive influence on state elites' decisions concerning the construction of institutions of social regulation across the territory.

I examined three important processes by which political elites built the capacity of the state to exercise social control without resorting to physical force: the implementation of agrarian reform, the expansion of mass primary education, and the extension of a civil registration system. These three policy packages multiplied the weight and presence of the state in postrevolutionary Mexican society. The set of practices and infrastructures that accompanied them held potential for bolstering state social control in two main ways.

First, they entailed higher capacity to monitor communities, see through social complexity, and make citizens dependent on state allies to access desired goods and services. In this concrete, material ways, they reinforced the state's ability to constrain contentious collective action. Social groups hostile to the governing coalition, like political Catholics, would be less able to act on the basis of their anti-state preferences. Second, state builders saw agrarian reform, mass education, and civil registration as means to consolidate the state's grip over society by reconfiguring those very preferences and attachments. In addition to constraining societal contention, then, they would remake and persuade citizens in the cultural-ideational plane.

Through an examination of the historical record and newly compiled datasets, I showed that institutional investments in these three modes of social regulation were significantly heavier where the Church held more sway, Catholic resistance was pervasive, and the postrevolutionary state's legitimacy thin to nonexistent. State institutions to penetrate society and shape behavior were thus built in a dialectical struggle with political Catholicism.

The findings in this chapter hold important implications for my argument about the relationship between the religious cleavage and state formation across territory. The results for the construction of the education system suggest that the impact of the religious cleavage on state capacity patterns is not reducible to a legacy of civil war. Rather, its effect was more general and pervasive. The antagonism between political Catholics and the anticlerical state, well-established before and after the period of open armed conflict (1926-1929), shaped state capacity outcomes because it structured elite state-building efforts, and citizens' willingness to comply, all throughout the state-building period.

Put differently, the religious cleavage informed elites' state-building choices not only due to the fact that it sparked the Cristero Rebellion. Their decisions about the construction of institutions across territory obeyed to ideological commitments and political calculations that went beyond the emergence of Catholic insurgency *per se*. Similarly, in the opposite camp, the religious question shaped attitudes and behaviors toward the state among political Catholics before, and well after the large uprising of the late 1920s. The cleavage incited a range of forms of contention, including but not restricted to rebellion. Throughout the study, I have used novel data on both the geography of insurgency and the historical strength of the Church in order to capture this underlying confrontation and make it empirically tractable. Theoretically, however,

the deep causal factor behind the uneven development of institutions lies in the polarization of society along the cleavage throughout the critical period of state-building.

Finally, the findings in this chapter contribute to our understanding of state-building processes outside contexts where sustained interstate warfare or military threats pushed rulers to build the state domestically. In those instances, domestic divisions may become less salient and pronounced; higher levels of internal cohesion, in turn, may allow rulers to build capacity uniformly within their borders in order to project power externally. However, in a large number of cases in Latin America and beyond, cleavage politics has played an important role in state-making. Acute internal polarization is often a powerful force behind both decisions to state-build and the outcomes of state-building. For governing coalitions in polarized contexts, advancing ideological preferences and constraining contention among opponents can be strong motivations to build a more powerful state machinery. At the same time, because the construction of the state occurs in opposition to parts of society, investments in different types of institutions, and citizens' willingness to comply with the state, vary sharply across territory. As a result, institutions develop unevenly.

4.8 Appendix

Table 4.5. Linear models of educational outcomes with alternative measure of Church strength, 1930-2005

	Dependent variable: Δ literacy rate (1950-1930)			DV: School enrollment (1950)	DV: Average schooling (2005)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Churches per thousand km^2 (1900)	0.008*	0.006*	0.004	0.004***	0.002***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.000)
Terrain roughness		-0.008**	-0.008***	-0.002*	-0.002***
		(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Distance to Mexico City		-0.003	-0.003	-0.000	-0.000
		(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Distance to state capital		-0.010†	-0.010†	-0.003	-0.000
		(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.001)
State capital (dummy)		-1.273	-3.199†	-0.800	1.385***
		(0.863)	(1.604)	(0.534)	(0.291)
% pop in industry & commerce (1900)			0.323*	0.213*	0.187***
			(0.123)	(0.101)	(0.048)
% peons (1900)			0.024	-0.009	-0.007
			(0.033)	(0.013)	(0.009)
Teachers per 1,000 (1900)			0.177	0.395**	0.245**
			(0.387)	(0.114)	(0.084)
State officials per 1,000 (1900)			-0.086	-0.021	0.065***
			(0.117)	(0.048)	(0.016)
Log population (1900)			0.618*	0.119	0.235***
			(0.289)	(0.161)	(0.064)
Population density (1900)			0.005*	0.001	0.003***
			(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Population growth rate (1930-1950)			0.008	-0.001	
			(0.007)	(0.001)	
Constant	15.473***	19.356***	12.817***	6.236***	4.184***
	(0.115)	(1.714)	(3.236)	(1.432)	(0.693)
State fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
N	1,415	1,414	1,373	1,373	1,390

Parentheses contain standard errors adjusted for clustering at the municipality level.
† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

5 LITERACY AS A CLUB GOOD: PARTY POLITICS AND EDUCATION IN COLOMBIA

Abstract

I examine the politics behind the expansion of education and literacy skills, the first major social welfare intervention by the state in the mass of the population and a pillar of nation-building. Using original historical data from Colombia, I argue that party politics and church-state relationships shaped the development of state capacity to provide education across Colombian municipalities. In order to achieve dominance in an electorally competitive system, the Conservative Party and its clerical allies leveraged literacy restrictions on mass suffrage, in place until 1936, to broaden the vote base in municipalities under their control and, conversely, suppress the growth of the electorate in Liberal municipalities. This opened a sizable gap in educational attainment along partisan lines, aided by the retarded secularization of the public education system and the Catholic Church's historical partisan leanings. The empirical analysis exploits long-run cross-sectional variation, as well as changes in municipal partisan affiliation over time, to credibly establish the effects of partisanship on literacy. I document that the Liberal-Conservative gap persisted throughout the century of popular education, and show that differences are also observable with other educational indicators like school enrollment. The findings suggest that historical conflicts between rival partisan camps within a polity are an important source of subnational variation in state performance, and they contribute to our understanding of the links between party politics, religious cleavages, and state-building.

5.1 Introduction

A state with the capacity to implement policy uniformly throughout territory is a precondition for equal and effective access to the social and political rights attached to citizenship. One such right is education, which modern states throughout the world have adopted as one of their essential functions. In developing countries, states expanded the provision of education to the mass of the people mostly in the twentieth century. Public schools thus became primary sites of state-society interaction and deployment of state capacity. However, in many countries the power of the state extends irregularly across the physical and social landscape. This sharp variation within national territories belies the promise of equal citizenship rights and contribute to the reproduction of regionally stratified social orders (O'Donnell 1993, 2004).

The unevenness of the state has received increasing attention in empirical work (Acemoglu, García-Jimeno, and Robinson 2015; Harbers 2015), and a strong case has been made that national measures of state capacity should incorporate territorial reach as a constitutive dimension of the concept (Fukuyama 2013; Soifer 2008, 2015). However, theoretical accounts of the origins of this variation remain scant and insufficiently integrated into existing theories of state building, which tend to focus on cross-national and cross-world regional variations produced by exposure to inter-state warfare (Centeno 2002; Tilly 1992).

This chapter examines the historical development of state capacity for public good provision within Colombia, at the level of the municipality (roughly equivalent to a U.S. county) and over the entire twentieth century, when mass literacy and primary education were achieved. I focus on education as a window into the state's ability to extend and uphold social citizenship rights. Colombia is an ideal case for this type of investigation because historically it has ranked low in overall "stateness" and displayed very high subnational variance in state capacity, even by

Latin American standards. Beyond structural obstacles like a difficult geography (Safford and Palacios 2002) or nationally-constant factors, like a historically low level of exposure to external threats (Centeno 2002; Deas 2015), what political variables explain the uneven development of the state within Colombia's borders? Why did considerable cross-municipal variation emerge in education?

To answer these questions, I compiled a new historical dataset of municipalities that spans the period of extension of education and literacy skills to society at large, using census data and primary sources collected through archival research. This dataset includes literacy rates across Colombian municipalities for roughly every decade from 1912 to 2005, school enrollment rates for various years, and contemporary measures of educational infrastructure. My main argument is that the partisan struggle between Liberals and Conservatives, which historically structured Colombian politics and the process of state formation, generated large and durable differences in access to education and literacy across municipalities.

Unlike Mexico, where nineteenth-century Liberals and especially the anticlerical state that emerged from the Revolution secularized public schooling and forcefully confined the Catholic Church to the sphere of civil society, in Colombia the state and Conservative Party established the building blocks of the education system in tandem with the Church. Moreover, literacy restrictions on the suffrage—in place during a critical period of Conservative hegemony that started at the end of the nineteenth century, and only eliminated in 1936—created incentives to expand or suppress literacy instruction based on partisanship.

I show that, as a consequence, municipalities historically controlled by the Conservative Party obtained an initial advantage over Liberal ones in literacy and other educational indicators, which persisted throughout the century of mass education. In order to credibly establish the

effect of partisanship and its legacies on educational institutions, I analyze outcomes at different time points over a century-long period, consider a wide range of potential confounders, compare municipalities located within the same Colombian departments, and exploit changes in the partisan profile of municipalities during crucial periods of extension of literacy skills. The findings are robust to these different ways of empirically analyzing the data and across alternative measures of the relevant variables.

The gap between historically Conservative and Liberal counties, which widened in the first half of the century, appears to have narrowed in recent decades, but it persists despite major changes in the education system and the collapse of the Liberal-Conservative dualism in Colombian politics. Hence, the geography of state capacity, patterns of inequality, and Colombians' *de facto* access to the rights of citizenship across the country remain grounded in the political cleavages of the past.

The chapter contrasts these developments in education with patterns of fiscal capacity across municipalities, where the exact opposite configuration is observed. As I showed in chapter 2, a very significant expansion in the ability to raise fiscal revenue domestically occurred during a period in which the Liberal Party controlled the state between 1930 and 1946. At least since then, Liberal municipalities have consistently produced higher tax revenues per capita than Conservative ones. These partisan effects on taxation, as my empirical analysis revealed, are not simple products of selection or confounding by socioeconomic differences, geographic conditions, or other municipal characteristics.

Rather, they are part of a broader phenomenon of partisan state-making that, I have argued, helps account for subnational variations in state capacity. This is particularly the case in countries like Colombia where state-building emerged not as a response to *external* warfare—

which might increase domestic cohesion (e.g. Sambanis, Skaperdas, and Wohlforth 2015)—but was instead associated with high levels of *internal* political polarization, intense partisan or group conflict, and an exclusionary use and construction of the state apparatus.

The contrast between taxation and public good provision in education, emphasized here and also observable in the case of postrevolutionary Mexico, confirms the need to disaggregate state capacity not only territorially but also functionally. Existing research has tended to conflate different dimensions of the state and assume they co-vary in the same direction. By making this assumption, we lose the opportunity to theoretically and empirically analyze how different state institutions are built, and how they interact with one another (Soifer and Vom Hau 2008). In some instances, like the one analyzed here, we simply may also be mischaracterizing state power.

The chapter is organized as follows. The next section discusses why variation in educational outcomes in Colombia followed partisan cleavage lines, based on an analysis of the history of state-building and the provision of education in the country. Section 5.3 introduces the data and shows that, throughout the twentieth century, the Liberal-Conservative divide shaped state capacity outcomes but was associated with opposite patterns in education and taxation, a contrast that persists into the contemporary period. Next I subject the relationship between historical partisanship and educational indicators to systematic empirical analysis at the municipality level. Section 5.5 concludes.

5.2 Party Politics, Religion, and Mass Education

In this section, I present my argument that the structure of partisan opposition in Colombia conditioned subnational patterns in education. I turn to the history of the construction

of the Colombian state, and the central role of the Liberal-Conservative polarity in institution-building and public good provision, to argue that more Conservative areas were put on a path of superior educational performance, relative to Liberal ones. I start by outlining the existing connections between parties, the state, and the Catholic Church before the spread of literacy and primary education in the twentieth century. I then explain how these linkages created a persistent Conservative advantage.

5.2.1 Strong parties and weak state

At the end of the nineteenth century, Colombia ranked low in basic state capacity and public service provision even in the Latin American neighborhood. Frequent civil wars since Independence; an extremely difficult topography; weak foreign trade; and strong regionalism and elite divisions impeded state building and produced important institutional differences across regions (Safford and Palacios 2002; Saylor 2014; Soifer 2015, 2016a). A relatively more effective state only began to emerge in the first decades of the twentieth century, aided by coffee export revenues.

In the 1870s, for instance, there were only about 4,500 public employees at all levels throughout the country, for a population that exceeded three million (Safford and Palacios 2002, 242-43). Large parts of the territory, especially the extensive Eastern Plains and the Amazonas regions, were sparsely populated and barely had any state presence (Rausch 1999). Physically, state institutions were restricted to the Andean highlands (the most populated in pre-colonial times and the heart of the colonial state), population centers in the river valleys that separate the country's three mountain chains, and parts of the Caribbean coast.

Circa 1900, primary school enrollment for the total population hovered around 3.5%, compared to 8.4% in Argentina or 5.3% in Chile, and large differences existed across regions

(Ramírez and Téllez 2007, 462). The same authors report that in the traditionally Conservative department of Antioquia, enrollment neared 6.7% in 1905, compared to only 4.1% in Tolima, 1.8% in Santander, or 1.2% in Atlántico (2007, 475). These regional variations are typically attributed to underlying differences in economic modernization (Urrutia 1976), in line with classic arguments about the rise of mass schooling (Gellner 1983), given the increased demand for education that comes with industrialization and the commercialization of the economy.

Without denying the importance of the economic dimension, I will argue that party politics and struggles over religion also shaped the evolution of the education system, thereby shaping important outcomes like the diffusion of literacy. These general connections between politics, religion, and education are well-documented in both classic and more recent works on Western European cases (Ansell and Lindvall 2013; Lipset and Rokkan 1967). My unique contribution is to show the profound implications of these domestic cleavages for the spatial development of the state, on the one hand, and the persistently unequal educational opportunities available to citizens within a single polity, on the other, using very disaggregated and long-run evidence from Colombia. This type of investigation is particularly relevant for Latin American cases, given the sharp inequalities that exist in access to the rights of citizenship that define, and authorize, rule by the modern state.

The indicators mentioned above suffice to demonstrate the overall weakness of the Colombian state at the end of the nineteenth century and the low level of state provision of public goods. In this context, two types of institutions were nevertheless well-established. Political parties and the Catholic Church had deep roots in Colombian society, and their strength would prove crucial for education policy and the construction of state institutions more generally.

The cleavage that emerged between elite factions early in the republican era, mainly over issues of government centralization and the role of religion in public affairs, congealed by the mid-nineteenth century in what would be the most durable party formations in Latin American history.[134] Partisan loyalties did not remain confined to the elites but were "massified" through sustained electoral competition[135] and the partisan wars of the nineteenth century, the last and most bloody of which was the Thousand Days War of 1899-1902. Organizationally, Colombian parties were diffuse networks of officeholders and local bosses. These elites entrenched themselves in local government structures and kept loyal clienteles through partisan protection rackets, the distribution of favors, and other selective rewards to co-partisans.

Local conflicts between rival elites and villages, sometimes only loosely connected to the ideological underpinnings of elite conflict, became nevertheless codified as part of the master cleavage. In turn, the grievances produced by armed conflict reinforced partisan attachments and helped convert them into "hereditary hatreds" (Dix 1987; Pécaut 2001). Moreover, under high political polarization and a state incapable of providing basic guarantees, electoral contests often turned violent, thus further strengthening group attachments.

Early on, then, Colombian politics acquired a Manichaean, in-group-versus-out-group logic that organized mass political identities, electoral behavior, and access to the state, but also social relations more generally. The Liberal-Conservative fracture, as scholars have argued, separated alternative partisan "subcultures." This dualism continued to characterize Colombian

[134] The Conservative Party formed as an alliance between Bolivarians—an elite faction defending the legacy of Bolívar and favoring a powerful national executive—and moderate Liberals, alienated by the radicalism of other liberal elites who claimed the legacy of Santander. For a good historical account of the development of the two parties, see Safford and Palacios (2002, 112–56, 197–215).

[135] Universal male suffrage was in place between 1853 and 1863, a period of political polarization. Despite restrictions on the suffrage during most of the nineteenth century, a long electoral tradition and parties' popular mobilization and counter-mobilization efforts in order to consolidate hegemony seem to have contributed to the consolidation of mass partisanship.

politics into the twentieth century, with somewhat lower levels of polarization following Conservative victory in the War of the Thousand Days, but again intensifying in the mid-1930s and producing a new civil war starting in the mid-1940s.[136] Though we lack individual-level historical measures of out-group animosity or social distance across the party divide, the extent of polarization is apparent from the formation of politically homogenous communities, the stability of electoral alignments, the prevalence of out-party stereotypes, and the sheer frequency of partisan-inspired violence.

The formation of strong partisan identities early in Colombian independent history, well before the extension of institutions like primary education, or even territorial consolidation (the boundaries of current Colombia were only defined in 1903 with the separation of Panama), had major implications for subsequent state development. Liberal-Conservative polarization implied that more ambitious state-building measures, when adopted in the twentieth century, proceeded on the basis of sharp antagonisms that permeated throughout society. They also tended to have a pronounced partisan tilt.

Indeed, policies to build state capacity were typically tightly associated with the pursuit of partisan hegemony, which became the leading objective of party organizations. Core state institutions in Colombia were not simply under-developed or absent from parts of the territory, but exploited for openly partisan purposes. Parties' factional use of the governing apparatus when in power heavily conditioned state-citizen relations—it blurred the distinctions between political affiliation with the party in opposition, on the one hand, and resistance to the state, on the other. In doing so, it hindered the broad-based legitimation of basic state institutions, and the emergence of shared norms of compliance, that jointly facilitate policy implementation and

[136] The causes of midcentury violence have been much discussed. For a study emphasizing its partisan-political origins, see Henderson (1985).

further investments in state capacity. By virtue of extreme partisanship and polarization, state institutions failed to elicit broad consent or "quasi-voluntary compliance" (Levi 1988, 1997).

5.2.2 The marriage between Conservatives and the Catholic Church

In addition to the parties, the Catholic Church constituted the other firmly-implanted institution in nineteenth century Colombia. It was thoroughly involved in politics and the provision of education—at this time a privilege of a small minority and a marker of social stratification. Ecclesiastical issues were, of course, at the very core of the Liberal-Conservative cleavage. Roman Catholicism dictated the programmatic outlook of the Conservative Party, and legitimated it as a moral force. The party's founding elites "consciously chose the Church and Christianity as emotionally powerful symbols" to attract support from a pious population (Safford and Palacios 2002, 201).

A solid alliance thus emerged between the Church and the Conservative Party. Conservatives received the open support of high and low clergy as champions of tradition, clerical privileges that dated to the colonial era, and a social order regulated by Catholic morality. The support of Catholic clergy for Conservatism became a lasting feature of the Colombian party system. This, of course, had important political consequences. In many rural areas, where government institutions were weak and had historically worked in tandem with the Church, parish priests were often the dominant figure of authority, as well as the main agents of social regulation. In fact, even many moderate Liberals feared the socially disintegrative effects of curtailing the power of the Church and undermining popular religiosity. In any case, clerical involvement became a definitive component of partisan struggles. Well into the twentieth century, the Church served as a territorially-extensive organizational carapace for Conservative Party politics.

I argue that the alliance between the Church and the Conservative Party was critical for the emergence of a durable educational gap between Liberal and Conservative municipalities. The ultimately unsuccessful Liberal attempts at secularization of education and Church-state separation meant that the Church, in some ways more of a national institution than the central state itself, retained an influential position in the conduction of public education. And given its partisan ties, Church involvement worked to create long-lasting advantages for historically Conservative areas, as I will show.

In this crucial aspect, Colombian history differed from that of Mexico, where Liberals' victory in the War of the Reform (1857-1860) and the Second Franco-Mexican War (1861-1867) exhausted Conservatism as a political force and set the basis for a secular state, a project that fiercely anticlerical revolutionaries would complete in the twentieth century.[137] In Colombia, in contrast, Conservatives ultimately emerged victorious from the struggles of the nineteenth century. Liberals were politically dominant from midcentury to the late 1870s, with a brief Conservative interlude from 1855 to 1861. As in Mexico during the *Reforma*, the "Radical" faction of Colombian Liberalism curtailed Church privileges, sold Church property, expelled the Jesuits in 1850 and again in 1861, and implemented several other anticlerical measures to separate Church and state.

However, these secularizing plans quickly unraveled after a series of civil wars in the late nineteenth century. Liberal efforts in the 1870s to broaden public education and assert state control in this area triggered a Conservative rebellion in 1876—the so-called "war of the parish priests." Although defeated, the rebellion severely weakened Radical Liberalism and stopped

[137] Political Catholicism and (lowercase) conservatism of course remained powerful forces in Mexico, as Catholic resistance to the anticlerical postrevolutionary state clearly shows. However, Conservatives' support for the French-imposed empire of Maximilian (1864-1867) irremediably associated Conservatism with treason and disloyalty to the nation. Thus no significant political movement in Mexico has ever again claimed the Conservative label.

school reform in its tracks. Moderate "Independent" Liberals allied with Conservatives to unseat Radical Liberals from power, winning the 1878 election. After another civil war in 1885 ended in Radical Liberal defeat, a new constitution in 1886 and the Concordat of 1887 restored the organic linkages between the Church and the Colombian state. The Church was compensated for the loss of property, obtained the monopoly over marriage and citizen registration, and regained the control over the curriculum and the education bureaucracy. Specifically, Catholic clergy had the prerogative of supervising teachers' observance of moral and religious principles and demanding their dismissal, as well as designing school programs and textbooks (Helg 1987).

Alienated Liberals again rebelled, and lost, in the bloody Thousand Days' War, paving the way for Conservative hegemony until 1930. In that year, a moderate Liberal capitalized on the split of the Conservative vote across two candidates and won the presidential election. Only in 1934 would a more radical Liberal return to the national executive—and again face strong Conservative and clerical resistance. The relevant point is that for a long and critical period of half a century, the more progressive wing of the Liberal Party remained politically excluded and powerless.

To summarize, the political situation in early twentieth-century Colombia was characterized by a weak yet thoroughly politicized state apparatus, entrenched partisan identities at both the elite and mass levels, and a powerful Catholic Church clearly aligned with one of the parties. For the purposes of my argument, it is again worth stressing two historical facts. First, the Church retained thorough control over education in nineteenth and early 20th century Colombia. Second, Church, state, and Conservative partisan interests formed a tight complex, firmly in power from the 1880s to the 1920s. These linkages would shape educational

institutions and subnational patterns of expansion of schooling and literacy, with consequences that are still observed.

5.2.3 Partisan bias in the expansion of education and literacy

Why did polarization around the Liberal-Conservative divide translate into variation in educational outcomes across Colombia? Why did areas of historical Conservative support obtain an early advantage in literacy and schooling, and why did it persist as education was extended to the masses? Secular Colombian Liberals, after all, shared with their international counterparts the belief that education and literacy would bring civilization to the masses and dispel religious superstition, and they had made efforts in the 1860s and 1870s to strengthen and secularize public education. Moreover, spreading literacy and basic education had been, at least rhetorically, a shared objective of all political elites since Independence. Here I explain how Conservative electoral interests and the Catholic Church's long-lasting involvement in schooling and literacy campaigns nevertheless turned the country's historical partisan geography into an important source of variation in educational attainment.

As mentioned above, access to education and literacy skills in Colombia was reserved for the few at the onset of the twentieth century. In contrast to the rich democracies, where state-sponsored primary education was already well-established in the late nineteenth century (Ansell and Lindvall 2013; Engerman, Sokoloff, and Mariscal 2012), the extension of primary education—crucial for the formation of state-society linkages and nation-building—occurred in Latin America only in the twentieth century. Colombia was a particularly late arriver to this process, as rapid increases in primary education coverage were not seen until the 1950s (Ramírez and Téllez 2007). Progress in the first half of the century was slow and uneven, with enrollment for the primary school-age population hovering around 30% throughout this period (Helg 1987).

However, children spent brief periods in school that are not fully reflected in enrollment rates (Helg 1987; Lebot 1978), and governments, in partnership with the Church, did promote and oversee literacy campaigns to broaden access to reading and writing skills. The first available figures from the 1912 census indicate a very high illiteracy rate for the population above eight years of age, of around 83% (Helg 1987, 35).[138] By the 1938 and 1951 censuses, respectively, illiteracy among those older than seven was down to 46.2% and 42.5%. Although Colombia still lagged behind other Latin American countries, significant reductions in illiteracy were experienced in the first half of the century, as these figures indicate.

Literacy, however, had a fundamental political component, since the centralist Conservative Constitution of 1886 reintroduced, at the national level, literacy (and property) requirements in order to exercise the right to vote. In the federal arrangement of the 1863 Constitution, voting rights had been left to the states, many of which also imposed literacy requirements. Therefore, literacy was inextricably linked to partisan-electoral fortunes, except for a short window between 1853 and 1863.[139] Universal male suffrage would only be reestablished in 1936, during a major period of Liberal reform after half a century of Conservative dominance. In that year, Liberals approved a constitutional reform eliminating literacy and property restrictions on voting, which they calculated played into the hands of Conservatives.

[138] Ramírez and Téllez (2007) report lower illiteracy rates for the adult population in this period. Their figures are from the Oxford Latin American Economic History Database (OXLAD), which reports an illiteracy rate of 61% in 1910 and 56% in 1920. The difference arises because the OXLAD figures are for the population older than 15 years of age and employ backward projections using data from later censuses. The observation that significant reductions in illiteracy took place in this period holds regardless.

[139] The Constitution of 1853, in effect for a decade, had introduced universal male suffrage. Female suffrage was only adopted in 1957. Source: "Historia del voto en Colombia." Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil. Available at http://www.registraduria.gov.co/-Historia-del-voto-en-Colombia-.html. Accessed May 12, 2017.

I argue that these historical restrictions on the suffrage turned the spread of literacy skills and the provision of education into a political-electoral weapon. Conservatives—in control of the state apparatus since the late nineteenth century—and their clerical allies could selectively invest or under-invest in education in order to expand the ranks of literate Conservative Party voters and, conversely, limit the growth of the electorate in Liberal areas. Committed Liberals, in contrast, excluded from power, defeated, and especially lacking the support of an extensive organization with historical control over education like the Church, had no means of evening the scales.

Exploiting voting barriers to expand or suppress the size of the electorate in Conservative versus Liberal areas was a suitable strategy because of Colombia's largely uninterrupted electoral tradition. Parties fought wars and contested elections, and the latter were the dominant route to power. Participation in presidential and national legislative elections was largely reserved for elites[140], but the country was thoroughly politicized, and electoral contests always remained meaningful. Under the constitution of 1886, the president was elected indirectly every six years (then reformed to four), and through direct vote after 1910. Meanwhile, the lower chamber was elected every four years and local legislatures and municipal councilors every two, creating an "unending succession of campaigns" that kept partisan divisions alive and local machines constantly active (Safford and Palacios 2002, 249). These three last types of elections were direct since the mid-nineteenth century.

The thorough "partidization" of the state apparatus when either of the two parties was in power, along with electoral manipulation and intimidation, left the party in opposition powerless and essentially unable to win the presidential office, unless it could exploit divisions between

[140] Elections for local legislatures and municipal councils imposed no literacy requirement.

rival factions of the incumbent party. This is how Liberals lost power in the late 1870s, returned to the presidency in 1930, and lost again in 1946. For this same reason, the opposition party often abstained from the presidential election, arguing a lack of democratic guarantees and an even playing field (e.g. 1914, 1918, 1926, 1934, 1938, 1949). However, it is clear that for political elites and local machines, expanding their party's electoral base was far from pointless. For Conservatives before the return to universal male suffrage in 1936, investing in increasing literacy levels in safely Conservative areas, and doing the exact opposite in Liberal strongholds, was a means to consolidate their electoral standing.

The electoral incentives embedded in suffrage restrictions, in the context of an alliance between the Church and the Conservative Party, are therefore a crucial link in the causal chain between Colombia's historical partisan geography and educational outcomes. With the clergy heavily involved in school affairs and literacy campaigns, Conservatives had the means to leverage existing voting barriers as a springboard for electoral expansion. In doing so, they built a partisan pattern into the spread of literacy skills across Colombia. In the statistical analysis below, I show that municipalities more favorable to the Conservative Party experienced greater increases in literacy than comparable Liberal municipalities, consistent with this political logic. These differences, rooted in historical party politics, continued to characterize Colombia throughout its subsequent history.

The political uses of literacy play an important role in my analysis as sources of Liberal-Conservative educational differentials. More broadly, however, clerical-Conservative control over the state apparatus and the education system allowed concentrating education provision on supporters, who were also more receptive to these efforts due to their political affinity with those in power. Education, of course, had a strong conservative (and Conservative) thrust, in line with

the Concordat of 1887. Financially and administratively, the responsibility for primary education rested for the most part with the departments (the second level of government), but the Church was heavily involved in implementation and design.[141]

Religious instruction formed the core of public education, which during the Conservative hegemony was free but not mandatory, following Vatican mandates—the Church considered it a family decision out of the state's concern. In the municipalities, parish priests were members of education inspection councils and, as mentioned, supervised teachers and exerted a strong influence over their career prospects. Teachers had the responsibility of escorting their class to mass in the community's presence, and their payroll required the priest's signature (Helg 1987, 60). Clergy were also involved in teacher selection and training in normal schools, in some Colombian departments with complete control.

In the extensive, sparsely populated, and largely ungoverned "national territories," which depended directly on central authorities, the state fully abdicated of educational functions (Rausch 1999). In 1902, it gave Catholic orders—which had arrived in large numbers under the Concordat, fleeing secularizing trends in Europe—full administrative control over these areas. In reality, their task resembled colonial missionary work in stateless territory more than simple policy implementation.

The Church's continuing influence over educational institutions served as a mechanism to reproduce superior educational outcomes in Conservative municipalities, relative to Liberal

[141] Under the 1903 elementary-education law, the national government supplied education materials and designed the curriculum (with the Church); departments selected teachers, decided on their allocations, and paid their salaries; and municipalities were in charge of constructing and maintaining schoolhouses. Departments were responsible for spreading primary education and bore the heaviest financial burden. Under Colombia's unitary system, the president appointed departmental governors, and these in turn appointed mayors. This produced partisan coherence at all levels of government.

ones. Until at least the 1960s, the Church acted quite openly as a partisan force.[142] Clergy used the pulpit and their social standing to "indoctrinate the faithful with a partisan political catechism" (Safford and Palacios 2002, 286). They also remained involved in education and literacy campaigns for decades, despite some reforms that weakened their control.

Conflict over educational issues and Church influence began to reemerge in the 1920s, in the last years of Conservative hegemony. A German pedagogical mission recommended making primary education mandatory, and other reforms which the Church and the more clerical faction of the Conservative Party opposed. Liberals won the 1930 election after these divisions within the Church-Conservative camp led to fragmentation of the Conservative vote into two candidates. During the first Liberal administration (1930-1934), however, the moderate faction in power implemented little change in the domain of education, to avoid antagonizing the Church. Conservatives retained control over the Education Ministry, and the religious orientation of education was maintained (Helg 1987).

Open confrontation with the Church and Conservatives took place after 1934, when Colombia started to experience its version of post-Great Depression mass popular politics. Under the banner of a "Revolution on the March," the more radical wing of the Liberal Party gave the state a more interventionist socioeconomic role, promoted tax and agrarian reform, and sought to strengthen state control over education (Stoller 1995). The depth of reform paled in comparison to the Mexican experience under Lázaro Cárdenas in the same period, but polarization again peaked, and would lead to a new wave of partisan violence and "Conservatization" of the state starting in the mid-1940s. The Revolution on the March was also short-lived, as Liberals were divided and ultimately backed down from their more radical objectives.

[142] There are of course exceptions to the political involvement of the clergy and the support for Conservatives. This nevertheless describes the general trend.

Nevertheless, Liberals' school reform project faced strong clerical and Conservative resistance. The Church called the laity to withdraw children from public schools, and priests actively demonized Liberals as sinners. Despite somewhat reducing the Church's influence, radical Liberals were thus ultimately unable to erase the Catholic-conservative orientation of Colombia's education system. Moderate Liberals were also unwilling to adopt anticlerical attitudes. In fact, the weak Colombian state, lacking an extensive apparatus, continued to rely on civil society and the Church to provide education and expand literacy, even under the Liberal Republic (1930-1946). In 1940, for example, education boards were formed in the municipalities by government decree to oversee education, collect funds, and combat illiteracy. The National Board was presided by the national executive and the country's archbishop. Municipal boards were formed by the mayor, five citizens, and the parish priest.[143]

With the return of the Conservatives in 1946—capitalizing on the split of the Liberal vote into a moderate and a more radical-populist candidate who was assassinated in 1948—the Church recovered some of its prior influence, and state bureaucracies were purged from Liberal elements. The country also entered a new period of partisan civil war (*La Violencia*), in part fueled by Conservative-led repression in order to expand the party's electoral dominance to competitive and Liberal municipalities (Chacón, Robinson, and Torvik 2011; Karl 2017; Roldán 2002). Following the well-established pattern, partisan criteria dictated state action and public good provision.

Overall, then, Conservatives controlled the state for most of the time since the last decades of the nineteenth century, and Liberals proved unable and sometimes unwilling to break a pattern of strong clerical influence over education. In the second half of the twentieth century,

[143] "Decreto Número 722 de 1940." Ministerio de Educación. *Diario Oficial* 24340. April 16, 1940.

in an attempt to stop partisan violence, the two parties agreed to share the state and rotate the presidency during the National Front (1958-1974) (Hartlyn 1988). This was a period of educational expansion. Multiple reforms have since then broadened access to education, putting Colombia close to the objective of universal literacy and full coverage in primary education. However, these more equitable governments and reformers still operated on the basis of inherited patterns and state infrastructures. As I show below, educational outcomes across territory continue to reflect the partisan struggles of the past.

5.3 Data and Measurement

In this section, I describe the educational and partisanship variables included in my dataset and present the basic pattern that emerges from a comparison of municipalities historically aligned with each of the parties. I also discuss how partisanship is associated with inverse municipal patterns in education and taxation, which provides clear indication that different causal processes may underlie the development of different functions associated with an effective state. Section 5.4 below then presents more systematic evidence in support of my argument about historical party politics and patterns of educational development across Colombia.

5.3.1 Data

I compiled an original historical dataset containing several measures of education at the municipality level. The main indicator in the empirical analysis below is the municipal literacy rate, which I calculated using multiple censuses since the early twentieth century. Literacy was first reported in the 1912 census, so unfortunately it is impossible to extend the analysis back to the nineteenth century. Starting with the first available measures from 1912 nevertheless allows

for meaningful examination of the relationship of interest, mainly how the Liberal-Conservative cleavage shaped the spread of literacy to the majority of the population. The 1912 figures capture the distribution of literacy skills during the long period of Conservative hegemony, and after the restoration of Church-state ties in the 1880s. They are also a good starting point to analyze the progressive shift to mass literacy in the twentieth century. As mentioned, illiteracy was still very high at this time (83% for the population above 8 years of age).[144]

The dataset also contains measures of the municipal literacy rate at seven other time points: 1918, 1938, 1951, 1964, 1973, 1985, and 2005. These correspond to census dates. Up to 1973, the data were hand-coded using census documents, except for 1918 and 1951, which I obtained from the datasets compiled by Acemoglu, García-Jimeno, and Robinson (2015) and Chacón, Robinson, and Torvik (2011), respectively. Later years come from the Centro de Estudios sobre Desarrollo Económico (CEDE) at Los Andes University. The literacy rate is calculated relative to the total municipal population in all years, with the following exceptions: in 1951, the denominator is the population above seven years of age; in 1985 and 2005, the population above fifteen years. These changes in the denominator create minor comparability issues, but since my interest is on the trends followed by Liberal versus Conservative municipalities, not absolute literacy rates over time, they are not a major concern.

In addition to literacy, I collected data to examine if the partisan cleavage also shaped other educational outcomes. In particular, since literacy instruction sometimes occurred through temporary campaigns and not permanently-established public schools, it is worth examining other indicators of state educational effort across territory. For these purposes, I rely on school enrollment rates, which are a commonly used measure of public service provision and the depth

[144] I thank Leopoldo Fergusson for kindly sharing the 1912 census data.

of state penetration of society, beyond coercive and extractive functions (e.g. Soifer 2015; Ziblatt 2006). Specifically, I use schooling rates in each municipality in 1918 and 1957, just before the formation of the bipartisan National Front and with school expansion under way. The 1918 data are from the census. The 1957 figures come from the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (1957). This report is available in the historical collection of the National Library in Bogotá.

Finally, in addition to the contemporary measures of literacy, I use the number of schools per thousand citizens in 2005 to examine if the historical distribution of partisan control is associated with greater educational infrastructure, a possible channel for the sustained advantage in literacy observed in historically Conservative municipalities. This variable was calculated using data from CEDE.

As a first approximation to the relationships of interest, I classified municipalities as having a Conservative or a Liberal majority, using the average vote share for candidates of each party in the 1930 and 1946 presidential elections. Given limited data availability for the nineteenth century and for reasons briefly explained here and detailed by Oquist, a leading Colombia scholar, these two elections "present unique characteristics that make averaging them the superior alternative for measuring the traditional partisan identification of municipalities" (1973, 67). These are the only two presidential elections contested by both parties in a long period relevant to my analysis.[145] As mentioned, parties tended to abstain from the presidential contest when in opposition, weakened by the rival party's control of the state, anticipating defeat, and rightfully invoking a lack of an even playing field. By contrast, accurate measures of

[145] The Liberal Party abstained from presidential elections after Conservative victory in the Thousand Days' War in 1902, and again in 1950. The 1922 election is an exception, but accusations of major fraud and violent incidents advise against using data from this election to obtain unbiased measures of electoral support. Conservatives abstained from presidential elections during the Liberal Republic (1930- 1946). The next election in 1958 inaugurates the period of the National Front, during which the dominant factions of both parties backed the same candidates.

partisan support can be obtained from these two elections. Both were untainted by major accusations of fraud and produced democratic turnover. Conservatives received more votes in 1930 but lost the presidency to the Liberals due to a split of their support base in two candidates. The exact opposite occurred in 1946.

Support for each party across both elections is strongly correlated ($\rho = 0.75$, $p<0.001$), confirming the stickiness of partisan identification and the very low levels of cross-cleavage voter mobility. Parties tended to be electorally dominant at the local level. Only 18.5% and 20% of municipalities were competitive in 1930 and 1946, respectively, using an average electoral margin of less than 20 points as a generous threshold of competitiveness. Changes in the partisan affiliation of municipalities across elections are explained by targeted persecution, intimidation, and the sectarian use of the state apparatus by the party in power, much more than by retrospective evaluations, persuasion, or other conventional electoral factors (Guerrero 1991; Gutiérrez Sanín, Acevedo, and Viatela 2007).[146] Starting in the mid-1940s, Conservatives took this long-used strategy to the extreme, engaging in systematic violence and repression to achieve electoral expansion and, as the sitting president of the country and Conservative Party founder had put it a century earlier, "exterminate the contrary party at all costs."[147] Violent Conservative electioneering is considered to be at the root of *La Violencia* (Guzmán, Fals Borda, and Umaña 2005; Karl 2017).

Election results reflect the previous point. Between 1930 and 1946, with the Liberals in power, 154 (23%) of the 661 municipalities at the time switched from a Conservative to a Liberal majority, while only 10 experienced the opposite change. Between 1946 and 1958 (using

[146] Parties' offered exact opposite explanations for the explosion of political violence by midcentury, but both were based on this point. Liberals blamed it on Conservative-led persecution and repression after their return to power in 1946. Conservatives argued Liberal authorities had set off the violence during the Liberal Republic.
[147] Mariano Ospina in a letter to the governor of Antioquia in 1860, quoted in Safford and Palacios (2002, 223).

legislative election results for the latter year), 17% of 772 municipalities switched to a Conservative majority, and none saw the opposite change.

Table 5.1 presents the unconditional relationship between the historical partisan leaning of Colombian municipalities, based on the 1930 and 1946 elections, and average literacy rates for several years between 1912 and 2005. The last column in the table shows the difference between municipalities with a Conservative versus a Liberal majority historically. There is a substantial gap in all years in the table, which widens until the late 1930s and then slowly narrows, but persists, throughout the century of literacy expansion. In 1938, two years after the elimination of literacy restrictions on the vote, Conservative municipalities advantaged Liberal ones in the average literacy rate by some 4.5 percentage points, the greatest observed difference. Historically Liberal municipalities appear to start catching up at a faster pace after the dissolution of the bipartisan National Front in 1974, but in 2005 they still trailed Conservative municipalities by about 1.8 points.

Table 5.1. Average literacy rate across Colombian municipalities, by historical partisan affiliation, 1912-2005

Year[a]	Conservative majority (N=358)	Liberal majority (N=458)	Percentage point difference
1912	23.98	21.76	2.22*
1918	27.37	24.36	3.01**
1938	39.59	35.08	4.51**
1951	51.39	47.17	4.22**
1964	47.95	44.2	3.75**
1973	52.94	49.74	3.20**
1985	79.69	78.08	1.61*
2005	86.18	84.36	1.82**

* $p< 0.05$, ** $p< 0.001$

[a] The literacy rate is calculated for the population above seven years of age in 1915, and above fifteen in 1985 and 2005. In all other years the denominator is the total municipal population. Municipalities were classified as Liberal or Conservative based on the average vote share for candidates of each party in the 1930 and 1946 presidential elections. See text for details.

Source: Own calculations based on a historical dataset of my own construction. Election data come from DANE (1973). Municipal literacy rates were calculated using national censuses.

As noted, this comparison does not take into account other municipal-level characteristics other than partisanship that may account for the observed differences in literacy. The statistical analysis in the next section tests the robustness of these differences across party lines by introducing controls and exploiting changes in partisan affiliation over time. However, the figures in Table 5.1 are suggestive of substantial and persisting effects of historical cleavage structure on educational outcomes, consistent with the historical argument developed in the previous section.

5.3.2 Education versus Taxation

Before proceeding to the statistical analysis, it is worth placing the above patterns against the development of other state institutions. The figures presented in Table 5.1 point to a consistent institutional advantage for Conservative municipalities in public good provision. On this basis, it would be reasonable to jump to the conclusion that in Colombia, an overall stronger and more effective state emerged in territory historically held by the Conservative Party. A positive relationship between tax extraction and expansion of rights and services is at the core of state-building models that see capable states emerging from the bargain between rulers and citizens (Levi 1988, 1997; Tilly 2005), and the use of one-dimensional measures of state capacity is widespread in the literature.

My examination of different dimensions of state power nevertheless shows that significant divergences may emerge across arenas if we simultaneously disaggregate states territorially and functionally. Moreover, it suggests that internal cleavage structures—in this case, the deep-seated Liberal-Conservative fracture—can be associated with *opposite* patterns across state functions. To illustrate the point, Table 5.2 presents average per capita tax revenues in municipalities of historical Conservative-versus-Liberal majority. The table summarizes the

extractive capacity of both local governments (various years) and the national government (1950). When available, the table also includes revenues from direct taxes, which require more administrative and "cognitive" capacities and societal compliance, because they are not hidden in prices.

Table 5.2. Average tax revenues per capita across Colombian municipalities, by historical partisan affiliation, 1926-2005

Type of revenue	Year	Conservative majority (N=358)	Liberal majority (N=458)	Liberal-Conservative ratio*
Municipal taxes (per capita)	1926	1.18	1.94	1.6
	1940	0.44	0.76	1.7
	1950	1.61	2.47	1.5
	1964	9.49	13.82	1.5
	2005	50,370	62,385	1.2
	2005 (property tax)	19,478	25,005	1.3
National taxes (per capita)	1950 (total)	1.37	3.8	2.8
	1950 (income tax)	0.16	1.01	6.2

*Differences in means between Liberal and Conservative municipalities are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level or higher in all years shown in the table.
Figures are expressed in current Colombian pesos of each year and include all direct and indirect taxes, unless otherwise indicated. Other types of government revenue are excluded. Municipalities were classified as Liberal or Conservative based on the average vote share received by candidates of each party in the 1930 and 1946 presidential elections. See text for details.
Source: Own calculations based on a historical dataset of my own construction. Tax revenues in each municipality were obtained from official government records and documents collected through archival research. Relevant printed primary sources are Contraloría General de la República (1941b, 1951b); DANE (1969); and Ministerio de Hacienda y Crédito Público (1927). Municipal tax revenues for 2005 come from the Centro de Estudios sobre Desarrollo Económico (CEDE) at the Universidad de los Andes.

The main takeaway is that Table 5.2 and Table 5.1 are mirror-images of each other. Literacy rates are consistently higher in municipalities with a Conservative majority throughout the century, but tax extraction per person is consistently lower. There are statistically significant differences in per capita tax collection across the partisan divide in all years, with citizens in Liberal municipalities bearing on average a heavier tax burden. The last column of Table 5.2

expresses per capita fiscal revenues in Liberal municipalities as a ratio of revenues in Conservative ones. Until the 1960s, the average taxpayer in a Liberal municipality contributed at least 50% more in municipal taxes. The difference is even more pronounced with taxes collected by the central government, which in fact collected the vast majority of revenue. The partisan-based gap also deepens if we look exclusively at direct taxes. In 1950, for example, the income tax produced 6.2 times more per person in Liberal than in Conservative municipalities. As I showed in chapter 2, these differences remain after controlling for a host of potentially confounding factors, and historical evidence exists that Conservatives strongly resisted the expansion of the state fiscal powers during the Liberal Republic (1930-1946), a decisive period of fiscal state-building.[148]

In short, when looked through the lens of the partisan cleavage that structured the formation of the Colombian state, the "massification" of literacy—a major intervention in society—followed an opposite pattern than the development of fiscal capacity. Soifer identified the dearth of work on the relationship between various arenas of state power as "an important gap in the study of state development" (2008, 247). This chapter makes a contribution in this respect. Under my theoretical argument, variations across dimensions may emerge because of the way in which opposing political camps within the polity approach the state and use its power, especially when polarization is high and the opposing groups are fairly evenly matched. In the case of Colombia, both parties used the state in exclusionary ways that produced a complex spatial distribution of state capacities. Conservatives disproportionately promoted literacy and education among co-partisans out of partisan interest, cementing a long-run advantage; however,

[148] Direct taxes represented less than 7% of national government revenues before the Liberal Republic. By the time Liberals left power in 1946, they represented more than 50%. Conservative elites in Antioquia organized massive protests to resist tax reform (Safford and Palacios 2002, 291).

their resistance to the development of stronger tax institutions under polarizing Liberal governments perpetuated the Colombian state's fiscal weakness.

5.4 Empirical Analysis

In order to credibly establish an empirical relationship between the partisan composition of municipalities and educational attainment, it is necessary to consider alternative explanations for the observed correlations. Specifically, we want to account for the possibility that systematic differences across municipalities may explain both the strength of the parties and subsequent educational outcomes. In this section, I show that empirical patterns remain consistent with my historical argument after implementing several strategies to deal with this inferential challenge. I take four main steps to do so.

First, I collected municipal-level historical information to control statistically for a host of potential confounders. Second, I rely exclusively on variation *within* Colombian departments (the second level of government) to remove all observed and unobserved factors shared by municipalities located in the same department. This is done by estimating all models with departmental fixed effects. Because departmental governments remained in charge of most educational functions for a long period and departments are associated with many cultural, economic, and geographic variations, municipalities in the same department are more comparable to each other.

Third, I exploit changes in the partisan affiliation of municipalities across election cycles. This adds a temporal component to the analysis and removes all potential sources of bias that remained constant across elections. Relatedly, I estimate models with lagged values of the dependent variable to examine change in municipalities of different partisan type, relative to a

baseline. Fourth, I estimate the relationship between historical partisan control and literacy at various time points in the twentieth century in order to adequately document the existence of a persisting, long-run impact of the partisan cleavage on educational attainment.

5.4.1 Alternative explanations

Existing arguments suggest that electoral competition, and in general political institutions that give "voice" to citizens, lead to investments in the expansion of education (Lake and Baum 2001; Lindert 2004; Stasavage 2005). This national-level argument, taken to the subnational level, would imply that more competitive municipalities should have experienced greater investments in education, especially after the elimination of suffrage restrictions in 1936. I consider this possibility below, but it should be noted that substantial increases in literacy were already occurring before this broadening of the political voice (the 1938 census reported a literacy rate of approximately 54% for the population above seven years of age).

Another prominent line of explanation holds that the expansion of mass education responded to modernization and economic change, in particular increasing industrialization and commercialization. This classic argument (Gellner 1983) has been made for Colombia (Parra 1977; Ramírez and Téllez 2007; Urrutia 1976). Engerman, Mariscal, and Sokoloff offer another structural explanation that emphasizes inequality as a cause of educational underdevelopment (2012). These socioeconomic factors do not appear to be related to partisanship across Colombian municipalities in obvious ways. The predominantly Conservative department of Antioquia led the way in industrialization and education, but at the same time important cities and sites of economic activity throughout the country tended to lean Liberal (Bushnell 1993, 190). Other scholars have made the case that local partisan affiliations in Colombia were influenced by many idiosyncratic historical and political events and are not simple functions of

factors like economic interests, inequality, or geography (Chacón, Robinson, and Torvik 2011; Pinzón de Lewin 1989).

Nevertheless, in the models below I include a range of control variables to account for the potential confounding effect of socioeconomic structure and more precisely estimate the effect of partisan control. These include census measures of urbanization and total population. Urbanization is a widely accepted measure of the kind of socioeconomic factors that are thought to drive mass education (see Ansell and Lindvall 2013). In addition, I also control for several covariates that are related to economic production and development and also capture Colombia's varying geography. These include the distance between the municipal seat and the department's capital along the geodesic (in kilometers), calculated using geographic software; surface area (km^2), altitude, and an indicator variable for department capitals, from CEDE; and average annual rainfall (mm), the share of land suitable for agriculture, and the share of land suitable for livestock, taken from the dataset compiled by Acemoglu, García-Jimeno, and Robinson (2015).

In some model specifications, I also add other variables related to the presence and strength of state institutions in the municipality. These include the number of public employees per 1,000 citizens in 1924 for each of the three levels of government, as well as (log) municipal tax revenues per capita in 1926.[149] I obtained these data from the 1924 statistical yearbook and Ministerio de Hacienda y Crédito Público (1927), respectively. These measures for the 1920s help me rule out the possibility that variations in other institutional dimensions of the state explain both parties' electoral support in 1930-1946 and educational development throughout twentieth century.

[149] I linearly interpolated population figures between 1918 (from the census) and 1928 (from the 1936 statistical yearbook) to obtain estimates of the 1926 municipal population.

Descriptive statistics of all variables used in this chapter can be found in Table 5.6 in the Appendix.

5.4.2 Empirical tests of Conservatism on literacy

I begin by regressing the literacy rate in 1938 on the electoral strength of the Conservative Party in the municipality, with departmental fixed effects and no additional controls. Conservative support in this baseline model is measured as the vote share received by the two Conservative candidates in the 1930 presidential election. 1938 is the best available time point to evaluate patterns of expansion of literacy before the introduction of universal male suffrage in 1936. 1938 also represents the first time the census reported that the majority of the population above seven years of age was literate (53.8%), a considerable improvement of the 1912 figure of 17%. A map displaying the variation in the literacy rate across Colombia's municipalities in 1938 appears as Figure 5.1 in the chapter Appendix.

Model 1 in Table 5.3 presents the results. Coefficients in all models are estimated via OLS. Consistent with the pattern presented in the previous section, support for the Conservative Party in the municipality is positively and significantly associated with the literacy rate, even after the inclusion of the departmental fixed effects. Based on the coefficient in model 1, every standard deviation increase in the Conservative vote in 1930 (approximately 30 points) is linked to 1.4 additional points in the literacy rate by 1938.

Table 5.3. Linear models of Conservative Party support and literacy expansion, 1938 and 1951

	DV: 1938 literacy rate						DV: 1951 literacy rate	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Conservative support (1930)	0.047***	0.034**	0.041**	0.053***	0.040**	0.053***	0.031*	0.042*
	(0.014)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.017)
Lagged DV (1918 literacy)		0.482***	0.474***	0.421***	0.314***	0.265***	0.536***	0.265**
		(0.059)	(0.061)	(0.062)	(0.063)	(0.061)	(0.087)	(0.090)
Switch Con to Lib (1930 to 1946)			-1.828*	-1.955*	-2.097*	-2.513**	-2.400*	-3.428***
			(0.865)	(0.887)	(0.902)	(0.960)	(0.997)	(1.003)
Competitive municipality (1930)				0.238	-0.226	-0.401		-0.082
				(0.812)	(0.820)	(0.807)		(0.918)
Log population (1918)				-0.072	0.143	1.388*		0.596
				(0.569)	(0.603)	(0.655)		(0.705)
% urban population (1938)				0.137***	0.127***	0.076**		0.102***
				(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.024)		(0.031)
Municipal employees per 1,000 (1924)						0.633		0.485
						(0.339)		(0.336)
Dept. employees per 1,000 (1924)						0.740*		0.988**
						(0.298)		(0.374)
National employees per 1,000 (1924)						0.238		0.067
						(0.211)		(0.233)
Log municipal taxes per capita (1926)						2.396**		3.029***
						(0.732)		(0.882)
Constant	49.138***	32.843***	33.258***	32.501***	38.454***	22.764***	43.543***	40.181***
	(1.490)	(2.493)	(2.570)	(5.609)	(6.301)	(6.872)	(3.493)	(7.328)
Geographic controls	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES
Departmental fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
R^2	0.47	0.61	0.6	0.63	0.66	0.71	0.58	0.69
N	673	645	631	627	581	574	589	574

Parentheses contain heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors. The number of observations drops in some models due to the administrative creation or elimination of municipalities and missing values in some of the predictors. Geographic controls include distance to the department capital, surface area, altitude, department capital (dummy), rainfall, and shares of agriculture-suitable and livestock-suitable land. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Did Conservative governments and their Church allies disproportionately provide literacy skills in areas they controlled, in order to expand the pool of Conservative voters, and before literacy restrictions were eliminated by Liberals in 1936? The coefficient on Conservative support in model 1 is consistent with this argument, but more demanding tests are offered by model 2 and subsequent columns in Table 5.3. All these models include the literacy rate in 1918 as a control, and therefore examine *changes* in literacy within the municipalities between 1918 and 1938, rather than absolute levels.[150] I use 1918 as a baseline to avoid losing observations, because data are missing for all municipalities in the department of Magdalena in the 1912 census.[151]

Adding the lagged value of the dependent variable as a control helps alleviate potential endogeneity by removing all municipal characteristics that constantly affect the literacy rate across years. The coefficient on Conservative support is interpreted as the size of the increase in the literacy rate between 1918 and 1938 associated with a one-percentage point increase in the Conservative vote share in 1930. This therefore directly tests for a differential treatment of Conservative municipalities during a period of significant expansion of literacy, in which the ability to read and write was a precondition for the right to vote.

As expected, the coefficient on Conservative Party support in model 2 is positive and significant at conventional levels. The fact that the 1938 figures technically include the effects on literacy of eight years of Liberal governments since 1930 may be a cause for concern, however. Ideally, we would examine change up until that year, but data are only available for 1938, when the census was conducted. It is unlikely, however, that Liberal educational efforts in the short

[150] Algebraically, the estimate for the effect of Conservative support on the 1938 literacy rate in an equation with 1918 literacy rate on the right-hand side is identical to the one obtained when the dependent variable is instead specified as a first difference (1938 *minus* 1918). See Angrist and Pischke (2009), sections 5.3-5.4.
[151] The department of Magdalena included municipalities in the present-day departments of Magdalena and Cesar.

period they had held power by the time of the census have a major impact on the estimates in Table 5.3. Moreover, notice that Liberal efforts to close the partisan gap in literacy would bias the effect of Conservatism *downwards*. It should also be recalled that the Church remained heavily involved in education and literacy campaigns throughout the period, Conservatives controlled the Education Ministry until 1934, and literacy restrictions were only lifted in 1936.

Model 3 conducts another test of the argument that a gap in literacy levels emerged along party lines for partisan reasons, independent of other factors. The model includes an indicator variable for the 23% of municipalities that switched from a Conservative to a Liberal majority between the 1930 and 1946 elections.[152] This specification is yet more demanding in that it isolates the effects of partisanship in these municipalities from all observable and unobservable characteristics that remained constant over the time period, and that could be related to their literacy levels. Consistent with the argument of partisan bias in Conservative-clerical educational effort, the coefficient on this variable is negative and significant, while the coefficient on the Conservative vote share increases in size. The "punishment" for moving from a Conservative to a Liberal majority is a shrinkage in the expansion of literacy between 1918 and 1938 of approximately 2 percentage points.

This result suggests that Conservative municipalities that underwent a process of Liberalization during the Liberal Republic experienced, as a result of this change in partisan affiliation, significantly lower increases in the literacy rate than they would have experienced had they remained loyal to the Conservative Party. A third of these 154 municipalities were located in the departments of Boyacá and the Santanders, which Conservatives would explicitly mention,

[152] Because Conservatives did not field candidates in presidential elections between these years, I am forced to use the 1930-1946 change to capture a process of Liberalization and assess its potential impact on the increase in literacy between 1918 and 1938, which is of interest given that literacy restrictions on the vote were eliminated around that time. Examining change between 1918 and 1951 nevertheless produces consistent results, as I show in models 7 and 8 in Table 5.3.

in future debates about the origins of *La Violencia*, as sites where "triumphant Liberals had let loose persecution on the defeated Conservatives" starting in 1930.[153]

Columns 4 to 6 in Table 5.3 progressively add controls to the specification shown in column 3. Column 4 adds an indicator variable for municipalities where none of the two parties reached 60% of the vote, to evaluate whether electoral competitiveness drives increases in literacy. It also adds the (log) of total population in 1918 and the share of the municipal population living in urban areas in 1938, to account for modernization-type of explanations.[154] A prior measure of this latter variable would be desirable to minimize potential problems of post-treatment confounding, but it was first reported in the 1938 census. This is not a major concern, however, because rapid urban growth in Colombia only began to occur in the 1950s (Schoultz 1972). The 1938 measure is thus in all likelihood a good proxy for previous urban-rural patterns.

Column 5 adds a full set of controls for geography and land suitability, which also capture potentially relevant aspects of socioeconomic structure. Column 6 further adds pre-1930 measures of state presence relative to population for each of the three levels of government, as well as municipal fiscal capacity in 1926. The coefficients on both Conservative Party strength and the variable indicating change from Conservative to Liberal majority across elections remain stable and precisely estimated after the inclusion of controls. Based on the full specification in column 6, municipalities one standard deviation above from the mean in Conservative support saw an extra increase of 1.6 points in the literacy rate. Those that switched from a Conservative to a Liberal majority experienced a 2.5 points smaller increase in the literacy rate than those that remained aligned with the same party.

[153] Roberto Urdaneta quoted in (Karl 2017, 160). For conflicts in Boyacá and the Santanders following Liberal victory in 1930, see Guerrero (1991).
[154] Localities of more than 1,500 people are classified as urban.

As could be expected, urbanization is associated with larger increases in literacy, but no discernible empirical association is found for electoral competitiveness in 1930. The presence of departmental-level functionaries is positively associated with literacy growth, consistent with this level of government possessing the greatest responsibility for the provision of public education during the period. Interestingly, once the partisan composition of municipalities is accounted for, fiscal capacity is positively associated with educational attainment. Notice that the coefficient on Conservative strength becomes *larger* with the inclusion of per capita tax revenues as a control, which likely reflects the underlying negative association between Conservatism and taxation.

Overall, we find robust evidence that the stronger the Conservative Party in the municipality, the greater the increases in literacy before the adoption of mass male suffrage. Moreover, municipalities that defected from the Conservative Party appear to have been "punished" with considerably smaller increases in literacy, consistent with the argument that party politics dictated educational effort and shaped institutional development. The quantitative evidence thus supports my historical interpretation that enduring Conservative and Church control over the state, in combination with literacy restrictions on the vote, spawned educational inequalities across Colombia.

In columns 7 and 8 of Table 5.3, I change the dependent variable to represent the literacy rate for the population above seven years of age in 1951. Coefficients are therefore interpreted as the marginal effect of the predictor on the size of the increase in literacy between 1918 to 1951. These models address potential concerns about the temporal structure of prior specifications (see note 152 above) and provide initial evidence of the persistence of effects. 1951 is also a good time point to evaluate the overall patterns of expansion of literacy produced by party government

during the first half of the century, before the military dictatorship (1953-1958) and partisan power-sharing under the National Front. My conclusions regarding the partisan gap remain unchanged—Conservatism is systematically associated with both higher absolute levels and larger increases in literacy before the 1950s, a key period in the spread of literacy skills.

5.4.3 Long-run effects and other educational outcomes

The above findings document that a sizable gap in educational attainment emerged along the partisan cleavage across Colombia's municipalities. To recapitulate, I have argued that this difference was driven by three interrelated factors: the Conservative-clerical hold on the state apparatus since the last decades of the nineteenth century and up until 1930; Conservative efforts to achieve partisan dominance by broadening their vote base and limiting the growth of the electorate in Liberal areas, prior to elimination of literacy barriers to the suffrage; and the combination of the Church's partisan leanings with its enduring influence over public education, even under Liberal administrations. Did the resulting partisan-based differences in educational attainment persist? Is the contrast in literacy observable with other measures of the state's provision of this public good?

The remainder of the analysis explores these questions. Table 5.4 presents results for models that examine the level of persistence in literacy differentials. The dependent variables in columns 1 to 4 are the literacy rate in 1964, 1973, 1985, and 2005. Because here the measured outcomes are all post-1946, unlike above, I now use the average vote share in 1930 and 1946 to measure Conservative Party support. As discussed above, this is the best available measure of the traditional partisan composition of municipalities.[155] All models include the 1918 literacy rate as

[155] Results are nevertheless robust to measuring Conservative strength in 1930. Models are not shown for reasons of space.

a predictor, which allows interpreting the results as the extent to which the partisan cleavage shaped the extension of literacy skills to the mass of the population throughout the century, relative to a baseline year when they were still limited to a minority. Excluding this lagged value of the dependent variable from the models produces larger and always statistically significant coefficients for Conservative strength (models are not shown).

I present results for fully specified models analogous to models 6 and 8 in Table 5.3.[156] The only differences are that given the measure of Conservative strength employed here, I add a variable indicating if the municipality was electorally competitive in the 1946 election (as defined above), and drop the indicator variable for municipalities where the majority switched from Conservative in 1930 to Liberal in 1946.

Regardless of the year chosen to measure the dependent variable, the conclusion is the same. There is a significant and persistent difference in literacy associated with historical partisan politics. Municipalities more supportive of the Conservative Party experienced substantially greater increases than Liberal municipalities in the first decades of the twentieth century, and the gap remains visible a century later. The coefficient gradually decreases in size, indicating an erosion of the effect of the partisan struggles of the past. However, municipalities one standard deviation (27 points) above from the mean in historical Conservative support were still associated with an extra 0.7 points in the literacy rate by 2005. These findings confirm the enduring institutional effects of the partisan cleavage that structured Colombian state-building.

[156] The results do not depend on the inclusion or exclusion of certain covariates for any of the years. Only fully specified models are presented for reasons of space.

Table 5.4. Linear models of Conservative Party support and literacy expansion, 1964-2005

	DV: literacy rate			
	1964	**1973**	**1985**	**2005**
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Conservative support (avg. 1930 & 1946)	0.050***	0.039***	0.027*	0.025*
	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.010)
Lagged DV (1918 literacy)	0.185**	0.182***	0.123*	0.101*
	(0.058)	(0.049)	(0.057)	(0.048)
Competitive municipality (1930)	-0.439	-0.119	-0.172	0.516
	(0.645)	(0.687)	(0.809)	(0.674)
Competitive municipality (1946)	-0.717	-0.820	-0.096	-0.465
	(0.634)	(0.692)	(0.758)	(0.652)
Log population (1918)	1.380**	1.428*	1.037	0.358
	(0.511)	(0.572)	(0.625)	(0.523)
% urban population (1938)	0.056**	0.064**	0.033	0.019
	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.019)
Municipal employees per 1,000 (1924)	0.651**	0.534*	0.544*	0.129
	(0.242)	(0.254)	(0.268)	(0.272)
Departmental employees per 1,000 (1924)	0.353	0.357	0.617*	0.205
	(0.366)	(0.393)	(0.299)	(0.248)
National employees per 1,000 (1924)	0.224	0.151	-0.008	0.142
	(0.195)	(0.185)	(0.162)	(0.167)
Log municipal taxes per capita (1926)	2.398***	2.698***	2.447***	1.960***
	(0.561)	(0.612)	(0.595)	(0.534)
Constant	25.963***	30.630***	65.633***	79.730***
	(5.457)	(5.691)	(6.746)	(5.347)
Geographic controls	YES	YES	YES	YES
Departmental fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
R^2	0.66	0.7	0.55	0.49
N	508	510	509	511

Parentheses contain heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors. The number of observations drops in some models due to the administrative creation or elimination of municipalities and missing values in some of the predictors. Geographic controls include distance to the department capital, surface area, altitude, department capital (dummy), rainfall, and shares of agriculture-suitable and livestock-suitable land.
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Is the Liberal-Conservative inequality visible when we examine other outcomes, specifically measures of the reach of the public school system? As mentioned previously, state efforts to expand literacy involved some investments in schooling, but also *ad hoc* campaigns implemented in partnership with civil society. It is thus worth evaluating the extent to which the partisan cleavage shaped the extension of the state's educational infrastructure.

Table 5.5 presents results for a series of models that examine school enrollment in the 1950s, and the number of schools per capita in 2005, as functions of the historical partisan affiliation of municipalities. The dependent variable in columns 1 to 3 is the number of students enrolled in public primary schools in 1957, as a share of the municipal population. At this time, a major expansion of public education was already occurring (Ramírez and Téllez 2007). The reported results examine differential increases in public schooling across municipalities from the period of Conservative hegemony until 1957. The model specifications do so by including the 1918 school enrollment rate as a predictor, which controls for baseline differences across municipalities. Modeling the cross-sectional variation in 1957 without the lagged value leads to conclusions consistent with a Conservative advantage in educational attainment (not shown). Column 1 presents the basic relationship with fixed effects. Column 2 adds electoral competitiveness, socioeconomic variables, and the vector of geographic controls. Column 3 incorporates pre-1930 state presence and fiscal capacity.

The results indicate that the stronger the Conservative Party was in the municipality, the greater the increase in primary school enrollment between 1918 and 1957. Based on the full specification in column 3, every standard deviation increase in Conservative support is associated with an extra increase of 0.49 points in the percent of the population enrolled. Using the 1951 census to approximate the primary school-age population, this amounts to a 3.5 points larger increase in the enrollment rate for every standard deviation increase in Conservative support. [157] This finding suggests that when it came to schooling, Liberal municipalities in any given department—whose residents payed more taxes, on average—tended to be systematically underserved by the Colombian state, compared to their Conservative counterparts.

[157] The population between 5 and 9 years of age represented 14% of the total in 1951.

Table 5.5. Linear models of Conservative Party support and state capacity in education, 1957 and 2005

	DV: public school enrollment (1957)			DV: schools per 1,000 people (2005)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Conservative support (average 1930 & 1946)	0.024***	0.018***	0.018***	0.010***	0.007**	0.004†
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
School enrollment (1918)	0.096***	0.090***	0.095***	-0.035**	0.011	0.005
	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.025)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.011)
Competitive municipality (1930)		0.030	0.158		0.094	0.095
		(0.242)	(0.258)		(0.156)	(0.150)
Competitive municipality (1946)		0.018	-0.162		-0.129	-0.043
		(0.268)	(0.289)		(0.137)	(0.143)
Log population (1918)		0.060	0.173		-0.006	-0.092
		(0.185)	(0.220)		(0.099)	(0.110)
% urban population (1938)		-0.017*	-0.017*		-0.031***	-0.020***
		(0.007)	(0.008)		(0.003)	(0.004)
Municipal employees per 1,000 (1924)			0.010			-0.049
			(0.090)			(0.048)
Departmental employees per 1,000 (1924)			0.101			-0.001
			(0.094)			(0.036)
National employees per 1,000 (1924)			-0.038			-0.056†
			(0.063)			(0.028)
Log municipal taxes per capita (1926)			0.051			-0.497***
			(0.229)			(0.117)
Constant	8.369***	9.795***	8.446***	2.097***	1.782†	2.763*
	(0.420)	(1.725)	(2.166)	(0.197)	(0.994)	(1.102)
Geographic controls	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
Departmental fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
R^2	0.32	0.39	0.41	0.3	0.46	0.51
N	639	537	486	693	543	486

Parentheses contain heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors. The number of observations drops in some models due to the administrative creation or elimination of municipalities and missing values in some of the predictors. Geographic controls include distance to the department capital, surface area, altitude, department capital (dummy), rainfall, and shares of agriculture-suitable and livestock-suitable land.

† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Columns 4 to 6 in Table 5.5 replicate the school enrollment models but with the number of schools per 1,000 people in 2005 as the dependent variable. Although the evidence is less conclusive (the coefficient on Conservative strength is significant only at the 10% level in column 6), there is some indication of a positive empirical association between the level of support for the Conservative Party in the first half of the century and schooling infrastructure in the long run.

Taken together, the findings in this section further support my argument that partisan politics and state-Church relationships spawned divergent trajectories of educational development across Colombia's territory. Mass literacy and public education represented major societal transformations in which the Colombian state, despite its well-known weaknesses, played a prominent role. Yet the state was not a neutral political entity, but a power instrument for partisan forces fighting for supremacy. Enduring patterns of educational inequality can be traced to this sharp cleavage that structured the extension of the state's powers.

5.5 Conclusions

To conclude, I return to some of the larger theoretical points about the relationship between political cleavages and state development. I have argued that the variation that we observe in state performance across territory and functions is shaped by historical conflicts between opposing groups in a polity. In many contexts, the agents that organize such domestic conflicts are political parties. Dominant theoretical approaches to state-building, reflecting their focus on early modern Europe, have tended to emphasize external threats and warfare as the engines of institutional development. However, parties and domestic conflicts can play important roles in decisions to state-build, as well as influence the content and allocation of state-building

efforts. When internal polarization is high, state-building and party-building are intersecting processes, and this has important implications for the development of institutions that underpin state capacity.

My investigation of the development of the state's capacity to provide education in Colombia illustrates the importance of examining state-building over the long run through the lens of party politics and historical cleavages. I found substantial and long-lasting differences in educational attainment across Colombian municipalities that can be traced to the conflict between rival partisan camps, as well as to the alliance between the Conservative Party and the Catholic Church to further a particular conception of the social order. The hegemonic struggle between Liberals and Conservatives historically produced major episodes of violence, but also took place in the electoral arena. My empirical findings suggest that Conservative efforts to use literacy restrictions on the suffrage as an instrument to achieve electoral dominance contributed to the emergence of an enduring gap in literacy along partisan lines.

More broadly, Conservative control over the state for long historical periods and the retarded secularization of the public school system translated into systematic under-provision of education in Liberal areas. This relative disregard for Liberal supporters cemented spatial patterns of inequality in the era of mass education that even today, continue to structure the relationship between citizens and the Colombian state. In the 1960s, a sense of neglect from the central state and unfulfilled expectations about the expansion of social citizenship rights loomed large in the decision of radicalized Liberal groups in the countryside to engage in armed resistance (Karl 2017).

Finally, my analysis points to the importance of further exploring how the resolution of the religious conflict in different countries in Latin America shaped the development of state

institutions and education systems. The case of Mexico provides a relevant contrast to the Colombian experience. Whereas in Colombia the Catholic Church retained organic linkages to the state well into the twentieth century and collaborated in—when not controlled—the construction of educational institutions, in Mexico an anticlerical state frontally confronted the Catholic Church and built the public school system to undercut religious influence.

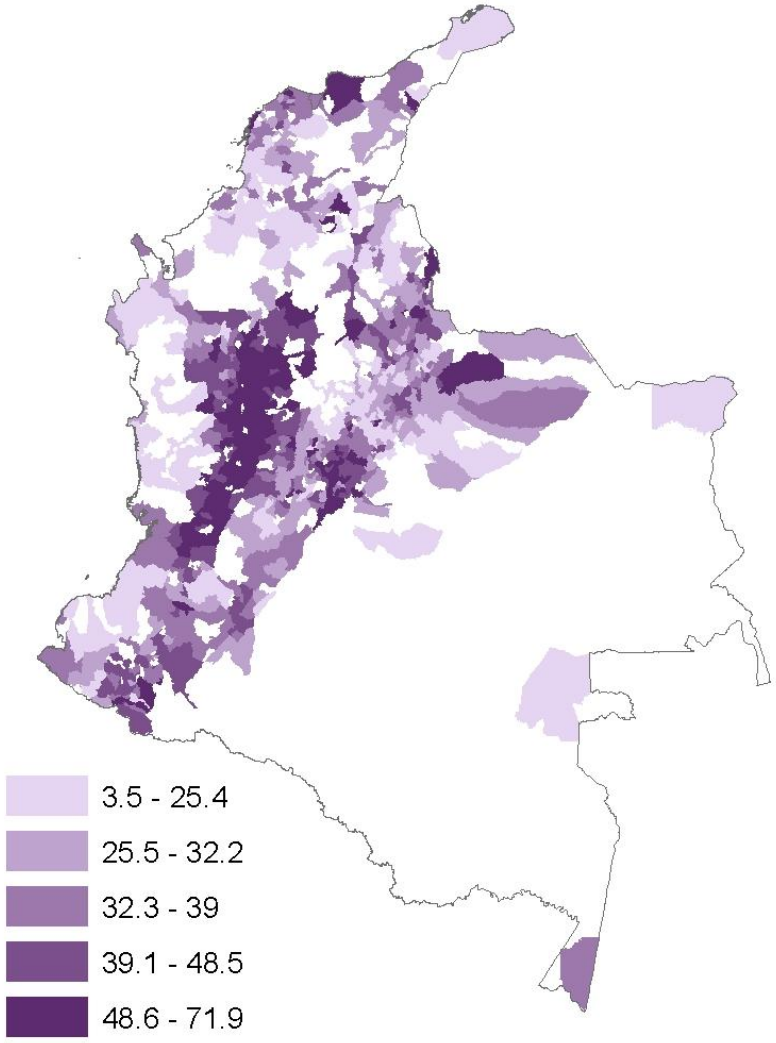
In the former case, the Church aided crucial state functions (and Conservative interests). Superior educational outcomes emerged in areas of Conservative Party strength with the Church's cooperation. In the latter, religious resistance became the greatest challenge to the consolidation of the postrevolutionary state. It weakened its fiscal capacities and ties to broad segments of the population, yet it also stimulated heavy investments in education, agrarian reform, and other tools of social control and reform. Paradoxically, both countries may have thus reached a similar outcome—superior educational attainment in regions of deep historical Church influence—through divergent pathways.

5.6 Appendix

Table 5.6. Descriptive statistics. Dataset on education and taxation in Colombian municipalities

	Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Education variables					
Literacy rate (1912)	681	22.76	12.40	0	82.38
Literacy rate (1918)	704	27.31	12.26	0	85.35
Literacy rate (1938)	802	36.92	13.09	3.46	76.36
Literacy rate (1951)	756	49.12	15.24	2.47	89.07
Literacy rate (1964)	869	45.34	10.14	7.26	70.10
Literacy rate (1973)	927	50.63	11.09	7.73	80.39
Literacy rate (1985)	1,121	77.85	10.57	0.11	97.25
Literacy rate (2005)	1,122	83.86	8.51	30.04	100
School enrollment (1957)	732	9.56	2.73	0.21	18.77
Schools per 1,000 people (2005)	1,118	2.79	1.67	0	9.43
Taxation variables					
Per capita municipal tax revenues (1926)	755	1.58	2.07	0	41.24
Per capita municipal tax revenues (1940)	712	0.61	0.70	0	8.27
Per capita municipal tax revenues (1950)	714	2.08	2.73	0	29.17
Per capita municipal tax revenues (1964)	844	11.81	12.53	0.16	166.2
Per capita municipal tax revenues (millions) (2005)	1,096	0.06	0.06	0	0.65
Per capita property tax revenues (millions) (2005)	1,096	0.02	0.03	0	0.50
Per capita national tax revenues (1950)	700	2.69	11.79	0	199.8
Per capita income tax revenues (1950)	645	0.62	4.51	0	93.64
Other variables					
Conservative support (1930)	686	54.62	29.93	0	100
Conservative support (average 1930 & 1946)	816	46.99	27.25	0	100
Switched Cons. to Lib. majority (1930 to 1946)	661	0.23	0.42	0	1
Competitive municipality (1930)	686	0.19	0.39	0	1
Competitive municipality (1946)	791	0.20	0.40	0	1
Log population (1918)	764	8.63	0.74	4.38	11.88
% rural population (1938)	802	15.67	22.89	0	98.7
Municipal employees per 1,000 (1924)	724	3.02	5.96	0	155
Departmental employees per 1,000 (1924)	657	1.95	1.80	0	23.75
National employees per 1,000 (1924)	712	1.09	2.91	0	41.42
Log municipal taxes per capita (1926)	755	0.12	0.82	-7.02	3.72
Distance to department capital (km)	1,102	73.50	58.14	0	392
Surface area (km^2)	1,018	669.28	1,425	15	17,874
Altitude (m)	755	1,331	876	2	3,087
Department capital	1,019	0.03	0.16	0	1
Annual rainfall (mm)	1,018	1,895	1,067	160	9,200
% agriculture-suitable land	1,004	0.50	0.34	0	1
% livestock-suitable land	1,004	0.27	0.28	0	1

Figure 5.1. Literacy rate for the population above seven years of age in Colombian municipalities (1938)



Note: Data were grouped in quintiles to color the map and come from the 1938 census. The large area in white contained less than 5% of the population and was not subdivided in municipalities, so data are not available. Other municipalities that were created after 1938 also appear in white.

6 CONCLUSION

This dissertation set out to document and explain the incapacity of the Mexican and Colombian states to uniformly create conditions for "peaceable, social, and comfortable living," a promise that ultimately accompanies—and authorizes—rule by modern states (Hobbes 1996, 111). This core empirical puzzle was embedded in larger questions about the origins of effective and territorially extensive political institutions, the formation and uses of state power, and the highly unequal ways in which purportedly equal citizens within a single country experience political rule. The project asked why patterns of state strength vary so widely within countries, what role historical struggles play in institutional development and current outcomes, and why states develop unevenly across both territory *and* function simultaneously. These are questions of substantive theoretical interest and practical relevance, given the persisting incapacity of many contemporary state organizations to effectively conduct the work of government, bring formal rights to life, and serve as institutions for social integration. I sought to offer some answers as to why states have failed to live up to those expectations, held not only by scholars and foreign spectators, but by the very populations they rule.

In the conclusion of his pioneering study of the Latin American state, Centeno reflected that "instead of asking, Why no states? meaning why no political development, we should explain why one form of political organization as opposed to another" (2002, 277). Following Centeno's lead, the dissertation took the Mexican and the Colombian states to be not unqualifiedly weak, inchoate, or plainly incompetent across the board, as if they had just failed to

go through constructive periods, have a meaningful impact on their societies, or ever attempted to accumulate capacities and functions. Rather, I focused on the very uneven character of their powers across territory and domains of governance. As I explained in the opening chapter, this is not an odd or irrelevant institutional characteristic we can afford to ignore, but a staple feature of many states, in Latin America and beyond, that greatly affects how they relate to citizens and what they can actually achieve. These are states capable of performing certain tasks in certain regions with relative efficacy, resisting changing historical conditions, and in some respects meaningfully shaping their societies; yet at the same time they sometimes fail resoundingly in core activities, are unable to protect basic rights with minimal uniformity, and *de facto* leave parts of their territory to the arbitrary rule of unofficial sovereigns. I sought to understand the historical process by which state institutions came to develop in this way, and the reasons for which life under the state is a very different experience even for citizens subject to a common ruling organization.

These are, of course, large questions with no single or univocal answer, but the preceding chapters hopefully contribute to a more adequate understanding of processes of state formation and institutional development in the cases under examination and more broadly. In what follows, I revisit the main arguments and findings, offer some concluding remarks about what I consider to be the main theoretical and empirical contributions of the dissertation, reflect on some relevant omissions and shortcomings, and point to potential avenues for future research.

The opening chapter offered an organizing theoretical framework to understand the within-country political mechanics of processes of state formation, conceived not only as vertical bargaining processes between rulers and subjects, as many influential models propose, but as intense redistributional power struggles between rival political groups in a given polity. Central

to this framework was an understanding of cleavages as conflicts involving sequential, mutually-constitutive, even dialectical interaction between political enemies having, each, broad support in civil society. A core premise of the general argument that followed was that state-building processes unfold within a given structure of political conflict in which governing elites and their supporting coalitions seek to impose their control over political "others."

I drew a basic analytical distinction between state-building projects that take off with the purpose of fighting or counterbalancing external enemies, can tap into reservoirs of inter-group solidarity and domestic cohesion, and in the process turn the state into an institutional vehicle to address common interests, and those where the most intense political enmity is located within the polity's own borders. Taking this point deeper into subnational dynamics, I argued that in polarized political systems patterns of state development across geography and spheres of state power reflect the lines of internal political antagonism during formative historical periods. State institutions and state-society linkages form unevenly in the crucible of struggles for political control and out-group subordination, which spawn different trajectories of state capacity across regions depending on who built what part of the state, who remained excluded during these instances, and how support for rival groups was distributed across territory.

The framework comprised two core drivers of uneven state development and two associated mechanisms of historical persistence, by which the cleavages of the past can continue to influence the performance of the state in the present. First, because state-builders operate in a given political space and make sense of the political and social environment on the basis of cleavages of "us" versus "them," they make decisions about the construction of state infrastructure and the deployment of resources that follow these internal fault lines. Under deep cleavages, state-builders cultivate state capacities in ways that can help them restrict political

participation, reshuffle identities, and contain mobilization and resistance among perceived opponents. These uneven investments can create initial institutional differences that are then reproduced over time via the continuity in the architecture of the state—available governing infrastructure and patterns of institutional presence and deployment across territory.

Second, in highly polarized polities, the ability of emerging state institutions to link with society and make successful claims to legitimate authority varies sharply across cleavage lines. Because states are heavily dependent on citizen collaboration and the diffusion of social norms of compliance to carry out several tasks effectively, the adversarial relationship that political out-groups develop with a given institution of the state, as it intensifies contact with the population, translates into variation in performance across territory. The cultural reproduction of habits, attitudes, and patterns of behavior toward the state that arise during formative institutional periods may in turn help reproduce a geography of state power that responds to historical political antagonisms, even as polarization itself subsides.

A central advantage of this approach was that it allowed us to incorporate both state-builders' investments in the state apparatus proper *and* state-society interactions into a unified and relatively parsimonious framework, to then explain outcomes related to state strength as joint products of these two basic sets of factors. Theoretically, then, my framework integrated more institutional approaches to the state, emphasizing elite coordination behind state-building projects and organizational features of the state apparatus, with insights from other bodies of work that center on questions of legitimation and societal compliance with political authority.

Another important contribution of the argument presented in general terms in chapter 1, and substantiated empirically in subsequent chapters, is that it helps us think systematically about the domestic pressures and dynamics driving the development of the state across a national

territory. While external threats and warfare are well-established as engines of state development in the literature, many have noted the exceptionality of the historical, geographical, and geopolitical conditions that motivated the bellicist model. This means that we need other explanations for how state institutions develop, acquire capacity, and function in the absence of sustained military competition and unifying threats from outside.

My core argument emphasized the inseparability of state-building processes from domestic intergroup conflict and power struggles. As a recent review explained, state capacity has become one of the most utilized concepts in the study of development, economic growth, and differences in prosperity across world regions, countries, and sub-national units (Johnson and Koyama 2017). The renewed attention to the state, even re-appreciation of its role, has produced much-welcomed interventions on the topic from scholars across the social sciences, and it has expanded an already enormous and intrinsically interdisciplinary body of work on the central political institution of the modern era. In this context, political scientists are uniquely equipped to ground processes of state formation in serious analysis of power and intergroup struggle, which, as Weber argued and was noted in the opening chapter, is the essence of politics.

Throughout the project, I stressed that state capacity is developed in pursuit of political (i.e., contestable) projects, with the purpose of exercising greater control over others and accomplishing goals that though shared by some, are detrimental to the interests and aspirations of others. This, of course, is a reminder much more than it is a novel point. However, as I sought to demonstrate, taking this perspective to its full consequences can help illuminate complex patterns of variation in institutional development and state performance that previously remained unintelligible, and that are not well explained unless political conflict is brought to the forefront of analysis. This approach thus forces us to take politics and historical experience seriously. It

departs from accounts of state-building that subsume political variables under other economic or geographic factors, as well as from those that gloss over the cleavages and partisan struggles that spur individuals and groups into action, give state-building coalitions purpose, and shape the responses to state measures across the society.

The theoretical argument and findings in previous chapters show that struggles for political supremacy play a key role in the formation and development of state institutions, even if those institutions subsequently serve other functions. States are crucial for civil order, the actual validity of citizenship rights of all kind, and many outcomes related to social wellbeing, but their origins and development follow political purposes that may be only loosely connected with these welfare-enhancing roles. In this sense, the dissertation warns against functionalist explanations of the development of state capacity and provides further evidence that the origins of political institutions should not be inferred from their effects, as scholars in the comparative historical tradition have insisted.

The dissertation also contributes to our understanding of the sources of state-building failure and the role of national cohesion in the formation of effective states. Early influential works noted that apart from the institutional changes spurred by warfare, the process of state-making in early modern Europe was aided by relative homogeneity within the boundaries of polities, and that those rulers who successfully created further cultural homogeneity constructed more powerful and durable states (Tilly 1975).[158] Greater homogeneity facilitated the extension of state apparatuses and administrative arrangements, lowered the costs of securing compliance, and favored the attachment of individuals and social groups to governing institutions and to each

[158] Tilly noted that "in world perspective the cultural homogeneity of the area in which the first powerful national states arose is a condition of prime importance" (1975, 19). Similarly, "the more heterogeneous the population, the more often a policy notably successful in one place would fail utterly in another" (79).

other. Following a similar logic, a large body of empirical work links ethnic and cultural diversity to lower public good provision.[159]

The argument in this dissertation suggests that it is the intensity of domestic political antagonisms, rather than diversity *per se*, which complicates broad-based institutional development. While underlying sociological differentiation according to some predetermined categories or high "objective" levels of fractionalization *may* increase the likelihood of political polarization, I here emphasized that uneven patterns of state development (which reduce overall levels of state capacity) stem from acute conflicts in the political arena. In other words, we must be attentive to the *political* activation of difference into cleavages that sort individuals into opposing camps. Colombia is a paradigmatic example. As I showed, a most intense friend-enemy distinction, centered on partisanship, fractured society and strongly influenced the development of state capacities across territory, without this cleavage clearly fitting into any predefined sociological categories. Divisiveness, not diversity, is detrimental to stateness.

State-building projects achieve highly uneven success, and thus subsequent institutional performance varies widely within countries, when domestic cohesion is low and the very construction of the state is perceived as a zero-sum game between political enemies. States that are built factiously, upon politically divided grounds, may be lastingly marked by the conflicts in which they developed, whereas states may function more harmoniously or uniformly in polities where a common institutional core could emerge prior to, or despite the fragmentation of society into distinct political camps. A key contribution of this study was articulating theoretically and showing empirically how high political polarization during state-building generates distinctive

[159] For representative examples, see Alesina and Ferrara (2005) and Habyarimana et al. (2007). The link between diversity and public goods has been questioned on various grounds. For an argument that both depend on historical levels of state capacity, and thus the relationship is spurious, see Wimmer (2015).

patterns of state development at the subnational level, with different dimensions of state capacity possibly displaying their own and sometimes even contrasting trajectories.

The discussion above already touches on another important contribution of this study, consisting in bringing the literatures on state formation and party-building and party systems into closer dialogue with each other. Although there are important works that examine the links between parties and states,[160] it is nevertheless true that parties are often absent from studies of state capacity and vice versa. The dissertation points to at least two key ways in which both sets of institutions can shape each other.

First, political parties, or to the least rulers with partisan interests, are the agents that set the state in motion and direct the action of state institutions. Rulers are supported by specific partisan constituencies and make investments in state capacity out of partisan interest. While this is true in everyday politics, it can be highly consequential when core state institutions are still inchoate and during critical periods of state formation. High levels of polarization can impress a squarely partisan logic into state-building projects, thereby conditioning what types of state capacities are invested upon and where. Relatedly, sharp conflicts that spur party-building are also likely to motivate highly partisan patterns of use *and* development of the state's capacities, which may in turn lastingly shape government performance across territory and function.

Second, as many have argued, states govern more effectively when and where they possess tight linkages with society and can elicit compliance without the constant threat of coercion. Political parties are the primary institutions that perform these linkage functions between state and society. Parties can help states penetrate society, construct legitimacy, channel demands, and thereby cultivate the belief that state institutions are entitled to demand obedience.

[160] Relevant works include Bensel (1990); Shefter (1994); and Slater (2010). There are also important studies dealing with parties in Latin American cases in which state variables play an important role. For example, Greene (2007) and Mainwaring (2006).

Where they are weak or under-developed, rulers might find it difficult to organize collective compliance without coercion, or to enter into synergy with society. At the same time, party-states, and generally states that are turned into outright partisan forces, face clear challenges in linking with political out-groups and inducing feelings of obligation among them. During formative periods, they may instigate attitudes and habits of noncompliance that are then hard to change. As a result, political geography may lastingly shape their ability to effectively implement tasks requiring citizen collaboration. The findings in chapter 2, concerning the uneven development of fiscal capacity in both Mexico and Colombia, are a clear illustration of these points.

Nevertheless, the relationship between political parties and state-building processes is an area that calls for further research. We need to better understand the conditions under which state-building projects can emerge and generate broad-based compliance across cleavage lines, how states' and parties' social and territorial penetration relate to and possibly reinforce each other, and how the characteristics and capacities of the state itself influence the ways in which parties compete and link with their constituencies.

Moving to less abstract grounds, the dissertation revisited historical processes of state development in both Mexico and Colombia using novel and exhaustive data. The vast majority of these data were collected through in-depth archival work in both countries, hand-coded given the condition of archival materials, and complemented with information obtained through other unexplored primary sources. As is well-known, working in archives is an exercise of finding needles in haystacks, and since archives are run and filled by states, one is often reminded of their shortcomings by the very challenge of locating relevant information and compiling systematic data from fragmentary sources.

To recapitulate some of the main data contributions of the project, chapter 2 relied on new municipal-level datatsets on historical tax revenues, covering both national and local governments in each country. This allowed mapping the fiscal capacity of the Mexican and Colombian states—and hence their administrative reach and roots in society—at a highly disaggregated level, during and after formative periods. In chapter 3, I used a new geo-referenced dataset on the location of more than 1,700 rural militias in postrevolutionary Mexico. This is the most exhaustive source on the organization of coercion during this crucial period of Mexican history. The chapter broke new empirical ground in a topic that has so far remained elusive for students of the postrevolutionary authoritarian regime (including historians), in part due to the difficulty in setting a firm empirical basis. The dataset is among the most complete sources of information on semi-formal local armed groups more generally, and in particular for postrevolutionary settings.

Chapter 4 drew on newly compiled municipal-level data on education, historical Church presence, and the expansion of the civil registry in Mexico, which were manually recovered from historical censuses. I also analyzed existing municipal-level data on the implementation of agrarian reform. In chapter 5, I returned to the case of Colombia and relied on data on historical school enrollment, as well as literacy levels in each municipality, as reported in eight different censuses held throughout a century. Thanks to the availability of electoral data in historical sources, in this case I was also able to exploit the country's historical electoral alignments as an entry point into the partisan cleavage.

In addition, the dissertation presented newly coded datasets on the geography of conflict during two major events of Mexican history, namely the Mexican Revolution and the religious Cristero War. These datasets were carefully constructed using an array of secondary sources, and

therefore they drew on the work of numerous scholars. To examine institutional legacies, I also compiled various indicators of contemporary state capacity across Mexico and Colombia, for distinct dimensions of the state. This rich empirical basis is itself an important contribution and can be productively exploited by future studies.

The findings in the empirical chapters, built upon the data sources just described, contribute to various bodies of work, and they advance our understanding of the sources and consequences of within-country variation in state capacity for several constituent dimensions of the concept. Because I have articulated the ways in which the arguments and results inform relevant literatures in each individual chapter, here I limit myself to some general observations about the implications of the findings taken as a whole and the opportunities they open for future research.

A key lesson is that territorial patterns of institutional capacity and actual performance can vary substantially across dimensions of the state. This is not an empirical accident but a natural consequence of the fact that states form not as coherent monoliths, but instead comprise a set of institutions that may develop at different paces and respond differently to conflicts and cleavage-based interactions between state and society during processes of state formation. Elites' cleavage-based incentives to cultivate certain capacities but not others, in some areas of the territory but not others, along with citizens' varying interactions with different agents and institutions of the state (the police and army, the tax collector, the schoolteacher, and so on) may well produce a geography of state power in which unevenness is both territorial and functional. This directly informs ongoing debates about the content and proper measurement of state capacity, and it forces us to rethink state-building as a series of nonlinear, interlocking processes,

taking place across geographic space and potentially producing different patterns across institutional arenas.

This perspective is clearly borne out by the results across the chapters. For the Mexican case, chapter 2 showed that Catholic opposition to the postrevolutionary state had negative consequences on fiscal capacity; at the same time, it pushed state leaders to develop institutions that could penetrate society in Catholic areas, recast identities, undermine resistance, and ultimately exercise repression. Indeed, chapter 4 documented how the religious cleavage led to heavier investments in secular, revolutionary education in Catholic areas to "defanaticize" the population and inculcate loyalty to the state. It also spurred a more rapid expansion of the civil registry and deeper land reform in areas of Cristero violence. Meanwhile, chapter 3 showed the tight relationship between opposition to the state along cleavage lines and rulers' embrace of local militia forces, loosely controlled by the army, to exercise coercion and surveillance.

The chapter also revealed that, perhaps ironically, the Mexican state's reliance on these semi-formal, far-reaching, and un-professionalized network of coercive agents to maintain order would negatively impact its performance in the long run, in the core functions of keeping the peace and controlling territory. The existence of militias *de facto* maintained the means of violence dispersed in society for decades, and it predisposed some areas to persistent violence and citizen mobilization to take law and order into their own hands. Crucially, this arrangement also stunted the development of civilian law enforcement and justice institutions at the local level. More rudimentary civilian police forces, less civic judges, higher homicide rates, and vigilantism—i.e., Mexico's serious challenges in the realms of security and justice—were all found to be associated with historical militia presence.

In Colombia, the Liberal-Conservative cleavage also created uneven patterns of state capacity across domains. Chapter 2 showed the negative association between the Conservative Party's strength at the local level and the ability of the state to expand the state's fiscal powers under Liberal administrations. In chapter 5, I contrasted the negative association of Conservative strength with tax extraction throughout the twentieth century, with the consistently poorer educational record of Liberal municipalities. Conservatives' control over the education system, in alliance with the Church, during the initial periods of expansion of mass literacy opened a partisan-based gap that persists to this day. For party elites, this was an attractive strategy in the longstanding partisan struggle for political hegemony, given competitive elections and literacy restrictions on the suffrage.

Given the quite distinct political development of Mexico and Colombia in the twentieth century, of which the revolutionary nature of the state in the former case is only one aspect, it is noticeable that, at a general level, a common theoretical logic based on the effects of deep cleavages proved useful in explaining subnational patterns of state capacity in both cases. Indeed, as was explained in the introduction to chapter 2, Mexico and Colombia differed in political regime type (authoritarian versus democratic), formal constitutional design (federal versus unitary), the sociopolitical bases of the state (populist versus elitist), the nature of the party system (single-party dominant versus two-party), and church-state relations (confrontational versus collaborational), among other factors, during key state-building periods. Evaluating the external validity of the general argument developed around this two cases, and contrasting them with countries where states were built more coherently, are possible avenues for future research.

In addition, more systematically addressing the uneven capacities of states in the administration of justice is a promising area for future studies. In chapter 1, I conceptually identified the legal function as one of the core dimensions of state capacity. Chapter 3 touched on this sphere of state power with the analysis of civic judges at the local level and law and order outcomes in Mexico. However, I have only scratched the surface of this topic, of crucial importance for the development of both the Mexican and Colombian states and their contemporary deficiencies.

Future work can also seek to provide more systematic tests with respect to the operation, and relative weight, of the institutional and cultural mechanisms of historical persistence articulated in the theoretical framework. In addition to examining the outcomes of state-building in the short- and medium-runs, the chapters also suggested that the structure of conflict during formative moments may spawn longer-term legacies. To support the proposed mechanisms, I drew on qualitative analysis of the historical record and of secondary and primary sources. In chapter 3, for example, I used archival materials that showed the sustained involvement of rural militias in policing, as well as their sometimes tense relationships with local authorities, to document how they thwarted the development of civilian apparatuses. When possible, I also indirectly assessed the weight of different mechanisms through statistical analysis. Nevertheless, systematic tests of the theorized mechanisms themselves were not provided, due to issues of data availability. This is admittedly an important limitation and, more generally, an issue that demands more attention among historically-minded social scientists.

The empirical chapters also collectively shed light on the role of religious cleavages in the formation of the Mexican and the Colombian states. Classic works have shown the deep implications of religious-based contestation and church-state relationships for political

development in Western Europe. Less systematic work on the topic exists for Latin America, despite the fact that the Catholic Church was historically a quite powerful institution, often with more territorial presence and social control than the state itself. Moreover, struggles between secularizing and clerical-conservative forces produced some of the most violent and protracted conflicts in the region, and they still influence political beliefs and behaviors. The project deepens our understanding of these issues. In Colombia, the relative influence of the Church across territory played a role in the formation of partisan alignments, which as I showed proved critical for state capacity. Moreover, chapter 5 showed the lasting effects of the marriage between the Church and the Conservative Party on educational outcomes across the country.

For Mexico, the dissertation showed the pervasive implications of the confrontation between the anticlerical state and the Church for the country's institutional development, even in spheres apparently unrelated to religious affairs like taxation or the organization of the coercive apparatus. The broad range of data compiled for the project allowed me to intervene in longstanding debates among historians and other social scientists about the functioning of Mexico's durable authoritarian regime and the ways in which Catholic conservatism shaped the process of state (and party) formation. Like some historians have recently done, I conclude that the clashes over religion in the 1920s and 1930s had a profound, and until now underappreciated impact on the strength of the Mexican postrevolutionary state. However, as I showed relying on more comprehensive data than has been available to other researchers, the effects across dimensions of state power are complex and spatially varied.

Furthermore, chapter 4 raises important questions about how postrevolutionary states engage with religiously devout groups and more generally treat cultural cleavages. Revolutionary regimes have everywhere upset the functioning of local communities, implemented policies of

cultural homogenization, and sought to create surrogate, civil religions, with varying success. In this respect, the Mexican case belongs to the broader family of countries where state institutions were born in revolution and developed capacity in confrontation with conservative, counterrevolutionary forces that could sometimes mobilize broad popular support. A promising area of future research is comparing the empirical patterns and legacies uncovered in chapter 4 with those produced, at the subnational level, by other revolutions. The same applies to the findings in chapter 3, considering postrevolutionary states' proclivity to rely on civilian militias to contain local resistance and control society at the grassroots.

Two other general findings spanning both cases are worth mentioning. First, the statistical analyses showed that state capacity and performance are not a simple function of economic development or wealth. Of course, economies in certain contexts may just be too poor to sustain minimally functioning political institutions and far-reaching infrastructures. At the sub-national level, wealthier areas are naturally more able to finance public goods and are likely to receive more attention from rulers interested in extraction. However, systematic examination of the determinants of state strength across dimensions and territory clearly indicated that political variables play an important and autonomous role in state-building.

The second point concerns the weight of history in contemporary political life and the opportunities for change in the ability of states to create inclusive social orders and protect citizenship rights. At face value, it may appear that I have told a plain story of historical determinism and hard-to-erase contrasts in state performance. Many scholars have suggested that the fate of the Latin American state was largely written during the nineteenth century. Perhaps less discouragingly, I have argued that twentieth-century political conflicts and state-building projects had important independent effects on patterns of institutional development across

Mexico and Colombia. Moreover, my analysis explains only part of the existing variation, which has also responded to more recent developments. And while the passage of time has not undone some of the legacies of past processes of state formation, I also emphasized that states are built by politically motivated actors that can meaningfully reshape existing conditions. Looking ahead, more inclusive political coalitions than those of the past may emerge to address the glaring deficits in state capacity in both Mexico and Colombia, and set the basis of more muscled and legitimate states.

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